

“BEWARE OF THE MACHINERY”
THE SABBATH & THE SALVATIONIST

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Even if people fail to observe the sabbath, it remains holy.

—Abraham Joshua Heschel

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PREFACE

Recently at an Open House event at our college here in Rancho Palos Verdes a prospective candidate asked a simple question in a packed room: “When do the students here get to practice sabbath?” The question arose after a long presentation about the detailed and grueling schedule that a cadet (student) must attend to in the training program here at the College for Officer Training.

It was a penetrating question that brought some pondering silence to the crowded room. The answer is that sabbath time is built into the curriculum schedule yet it remains an individual choice as to when to practice it and to engage in.

The following topic is one that is not familiar with most Salvationists that I meet. Many confuse sabbath with a day off or result to some legalistic interpretation of what it means and how it is to be entered into.

This topic of sabbath came to me quickly as a growing need to understand and to educate individuals within my ministry context. The following is a simple but focused attempt to get the concept into the stream of discussion and to clear up any misunderstandings of what sabbath is.

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For the countless Salvation Army officers, soldiers and employees worldwide, who dedicate themselves to selfless service to God and to humanity on a daily basis. There are too many voices to personally thank for their encouragement and curious interest about this project. Their eager desire to learn more, engagement and abiding interest has been motivation enough to get this topic out in the open to discuss within the beautiful ministry known as The Salvation Army.

Lastly, to Dr. Stephen Macchia and Dr. David Currie, for being excellent teachers, mentors and friends for members of my cohort and myself. Your encouragement and examples of Christ likeness have been brilliant. My life is not the same because of your influence.

GLOSSARY

Cadet: A Salvationist who is in training for officership.

Candidate: A soldier who has been accepted for officer training.

CFOT: College for Officer Training.

Commission: A document presented publically, authorizing an officer, or local officer to fulfill a specified ministry.

Corps: A Salvation Army unit established for the preaching of the gospel, worship, teaching and fellowship and to provide Christian motivated service in the community.

DHQ: Divisional Headquarters.

Division: A number of corps grouped together under the direction of a divisional commander (this may include social service centers or programs) operating within a territory or command.

General: The officer elected to be supreme commander of the Army throughout the world. All appointments are made, and all regulations issued, are under the General's authority.

International Headquarters (IHQ): The officers in which the business connected with the command of the world wide Salvation Army is conducted.

Local Officer: A soldier appointed to a position of responsibility and authority in the corps; carries out the duties of the appointment without being separated from regular employment or receiving remuneration from The Salvation Army.

Officer: A Salvationist who has been trained, commissioned and ordained to service and leadership, in response to God's call. An officer is a recognized minister of religion.

Ranks of Officers: Lieutenant, Captain, Major, Lieutenant Colonel, Colonel, Commissioner, General.

Soldier: A converted person at least 14 years of age who has been enrolled as a member of The Salvation Army after signing the soldier's covenant.

Soldier's Covenant: The statement of beliefs and promises which every intending soldier is required to sign before enrollment.

Territorial Commander: The officer in command of The Salvation Army in a territory.

Territory: A country, part of a country or several communities combined, in which Salvation Army work is organized under a territorial commander.

ABSTRACT

This thesis project explores the problem of how sabbath is something not in the consistent practice within the life of most Salvation Army officers. Through a survey conducted among 750 active officers of the Western Territory of the United States, the reasons for the problem are identified. Engagement with the information gathered occurs within this project offering pragmatic solutions to quell the problem and to suggest steps for implementation that are realistic and reachable.

CHAPTER ONE

BEWARE OF THE MACHINERY

Introduction

The author's first encounter with a senior officer in The Salvation Army was an ominous warning of what was to come in his future life of ministry. As a prospective candidate for Salvation Army officership the applicant has to have a personal one-on-one meeting with the divisional commander. A divisional commander is somewhat like a bishop. There is a lot of responsibility and oversight given to an individual for a particular division or region in which The Salvation Army has its ministry operations. The author was living in Concord, California at the time and traveled to the divisional headquarters offices in downtown San Francisco as a young lad of twenty years. It was the first time in his life that he had visited the D.H.Q. offices. This was a very pivotal moment in his life.

Lt. Colonel Victor Newbould had a very distinguished look. He had a strong chin, wore thick glasses, a balding head and had a piercing look that could cut one in two. He was a very educated and opinionated officer, highly respected, with great godly insight. As the interview began, I sat very nervously across from him in his office with only a massive desk in between his gaze and my sweaty forehead.

"Young man," he firmly stated, folding his hands and leaning in towards me across the desk, "I understand you want to be a Salvation Army officer." Lacking words in that particular moment the writer simply nodded his head up and down. "That is all well and good," he continued. "If God calls, you must follow. But I want to give you only one bit of advice." I listened intently wondering what he had to say: "Beware of the

machinery."

The good Colonel leaned back in his chair and smiled. He didn't give any explanation of what these profound words meant. He went on to ask a few more questions about background and personal theology. Then that was it. The author was ushered out of his office on to the next interviews with other staff members.

Since that time the writer has truly begun to understand what he meant. The author has served three-plus decades of his life as a Salvation Army officer. He has worked in a variety of ministry settings over the years, from pastoral to educational. In all these situations he has found the phrase, "beware of the machinery" has bounced around in the recesses of his mind many times throughout his service in full time ministry. No truer words have ever been spoken to in a prophetic sense to the writer. The metaphor of machinery can't be seen just in a negative light. There are functions and forms that represent in various aspects of ministry, and they can be deemed destructive if not managed with care. Policy issues, procedural matters, problems with people and the tyranny of the urgent are all "cogs" in the machinery that can chew away at an individual.

The Salvation Army, just as any other ministry organization, can be at times like a machine. It will grind its way along, stopping at nothing in accomplishing its mission. In so doing, it can consume the unwise worker if one is not careful. It's a machine that needs constant attention and a heightened sense of awareness if one is going to survive the machinery of The Salvation Army. The machine never stops in its mission of "doing the most good." Just like one who works in a sloppy manner around dangerous machines can get hurt, so too can this happen to the individual who does not take good care of his or her soul in the good work of helping others.

An Unfamiliar Term

In coming up with a thesis challenge for my doctoral program, I immediately thought of the term "sabbath" in connection with spiritual formation, my own ministry experience and the work of The Salvation Army. This is not something that has been written on extensively within the context of my denomination. In doing research on this matter one will find very little in Salvation Army literature that would convey that doing sabbath was a vital part of the conversation if at all.

“We will work until Jesus comes”, is a favorite lyric and philosophy of the spirit-filled and totally engaged Salvationist. As inspiring as this can be, it is in all reality the crux of the problem. If there is no time for rest and reflection, then the whole process begins to become unbalanced and unwinds rapidly into a negative spiral. If there is no intentionality in the teaching on the matter of the sabbath, then it doesn't enter into the mindset of the individual nor the culture of The Salvation Army. Thus there is no application and the practice of the sabbath the average servant Salvationist.

To be fair, each officer in The Salvation Army within the confines of the United States is given four to seven weeks of furlough a year, depending upon years of service.¹ Officers are not encouraged to carry over this time. Rather, it must be used up within the calendar year. Selected officers are sent on the closest thing to a sabbatical once in their ministry experience to the International College for Officers for a two-month rest and reflection time. But this is not the privilege of all officers. It is the exception rather than

¹ “Annual furlough (vacation) time is calculated on the basis of years of service completed by June 30 of any given year and is to be taken anytime between January and December of that same year. This does not apply to the extended furlough. An officer will be allowed to divide his/her furlough into periods as convenient to the appointment and program schedules as possible. Plans for the total period of time to which an officer is entitled are to be detailed on the furlough application form and include furlough addresses.” The Salvation Army Policies and Procedures, Part Two 07-01.03.

the norm.

The 'blue laws' are still in effect to some degree within The Salvation Army. The institution has very strict rules regarding the sale of donated goods and bell ringing on Sundays. Thrift store sales and the ringing of the bell at the traditional Christmas red kettle are not encouraged on Sunday. There is no policy or directive that says an officer must work a seven day week. Officers are encouraged to use common sense, be sensitive to the needs and schedules they find within their appointments and listen to their own bodies in regards to finding rest and time away from the duties at hand.

Yet the term 'sabbath' is missing from most literature and official documentation within the organization. Many officers (the author included) often do not take a regular day off, as the work of 'the machine' needs tending to. There is always something that needs to be done. There is always someone standing in need of attention. People need to be fed, clothed, housed and cared for. If The Salvation Army doesn't do it, who will? Finding time to disconnect from 'smart phones' and emails that need an immediate response only adds to the misery of the overworked and often harried Salvation Army officer.

Clarification

In this dissertation the author will be attempting to accomplish the following. First is to present the challenge of doing sabbath within an organization that prides itself on "doing the most good." Secondly, the hope exists to explore how some officers within this ministry context are practicing sabbath. Just how are they entering into sabbath? What does it take for sabbath to occur? On the other hand, the author expresses the hope to explore some of the deeper reasons why many officers are not practicing sabbath. Are

there common reasons why or is it just the drive that exists within each officer that won't allow them to stop? The writer is hoping to explore the positive and negative effects of this matter. The third is to give a pragmatic theology on the sabbath and some practical steps on how one can implement true rest and delight in the journey. Please note that the intent of writing or researching this topic is not to change the institution, any one individual or to point out the wrongs of the organization and attempting to make it right. I am personally highlighting something that has been a deep challenge for me in my own spiritual journey. I suppose I am doing this research and reflection for myself as a reminder of how I fall short in this area of sabbath rest. I figure if I can understand sabbath and get it right in my own life, my own soul will be enriched by it and I might be a witness to others I know who need to see this done right.

What is The Salvation Army?

When I walked across the threshold of a small Salvation Army mission front in the summer of 1978 in Concord, California, I had no clue what world it was I was getting myself into. It's truly an amazing organization that works tirelessly worldwide in meeting the basic needs of humanity. At the time of this writing I have been proud to serve as an officer in its ranks for over thirty-two years.

The Salvation Army is a charitable and religious organization whose mission is to evangelize and care for the poor and homeless. From the public relations stand point: "The Salvation Army is a religious and social service organization, a branch of the Christian church dedicated to the never-ending battle against the twin enemies of sin and despair. It is a holistic ministry to body, mind and soul. The Salvation Army seeks to improve the physical environment, provide for material needs and lead people to a

personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ." ²

The official mission statement is as follows: "The Salvation Army, an international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian church. Its message is based on the Bible. Its ministry is motivated by the love of God. Its mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination." ³ At the time of this writing The Salvation Army is 149 years old. The organization has its theological roots in Methodism. It was founded in 1865 in London by one-time Methodist minister William Booth. It was originally known as the "East London Christian Mission". In 1878 Booth reorganized the mission, becoming its first General and introducing the military structure which is still in place today. Booth took the familiar teachings of Methodism and adopted them into eleven cardinal doctrines of the faith. ⁴

The military influence is strongly felt and observed with its uniforms and its own flag. The Army's hymnology is very pervasive still today as words were set to popular tunes of the day that were sung in pubs. Booth began to wear the uniform and encouraged his followers to do the same for meetings and ministry. The rank system was quickly put into place as the Army was rapidly growing. Ministers were given the term "officers" while lay members were deemed "soldiers."

Catherine Booth, considered the mother of The Salvation Army, was known for her eloquent and passionate preaching along with her understanding of how to speak to the rich in order to get them to support the poor. A women's right to preach the gospel

² "Doing the Most Good," Salvation Army: USA Eastern Territory, accessed December 3, 2014, <http://use.salvationarmy.org/>.

³ "Mission," The Salvation Army IHQ, accessed December 3, 2014, <http://www.salvationarmy.org/ihq/Mission>.

⁴ "Mission," The Salvation Army IHQ.

was one of the lasting legacies of Catherine Booth. This remains one of the key distinctive of The Salvation Army in the present age.

The vision of The Salvation Army has always been to lead men and women, boys and girls into a proper relationship with God. From its initial beginnings, The Salvation Army has always recognized that a physical, emotional and social restoration must go hand in hand with the spiritual rebirth. William Booth would often proclaim the three fold mantra of “Soup, Soap and Salvation” as the *modus operandi* for the early day Salvationists. He believed if a man was starving in no way would he pay attention to the message of the gospel. Feed the stomach then stoke the soul with the word of God.

To this day, aid is given wherever and whenever need is apparent. That assistance is given without any discrimination as to a person’s race, creed, and sexual orientation, economic or social status. One doesn’t have to ‘join’ The Salvation Army by adhering to its doctrines or principles before receiving assistance. The scriptural foundation in all that is done by The Salvation Army is found in these words: "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'"⁵

The Salvation Army currently operates in 126 countries and provides services in 175 different languages. The Salvation Army is divided geographically into territories, which are then sub-divided into divisions. The United States is divided into four territories. Each territory is its own corporation with its own territorial commander that holds the rank of commissioner.

⁵ Matthew 25:40 (Note: All Scripture referenced is from the New International Version unless otherwise noted).

The basic service unit in communities across America is the corps community center. Within the confines of these centers lies a wide range of programs that range from religious services, family counseling, day care centers, youth services, and social services to highlight just a few things that occur. The services that are provided albeit religious or social in nature are all driven by the desire to proclaim the gospel that will effect change in the totality of the person.

The corps community centers within a defined geographical boundary comprise a division. These forty divisions in the United States are responsible to their respective territorial headquarters. There is a great deal of specialized social work that is conducted in adult rehabilitation centers within these divisional commands.⁶

There are four training colleges in the United States whose purpose is the preparation and training of individuals to become Salvation Army officers. At the time of this writing my current appointment is Training Principal for the College for Officer Training at Crestmont (CFOT) for the USA Western Territory. I have been appointed to CFOT since July 2006. My first assignment here was as the Assistant Principal. In March 2011 I was made Training Principal. As far as I have been able to determine to this point, I was the first Assistant Principal ever in the history of our territory to move directly into the chair of the Training Principal. My wife, Cindy, and I have a shared leadership role in our administration of the college. Cindy gives careful oversight of the business, property, food, and field training matters. I give direction to the curriculum and

⁶ The Salvation Army Adult Rehabilitation Center (ARC) ministries in the United States provide an in-residence rehabilitation program with a focus on basic necessities. Each program participant receives a clean and healthy living environment, good food, work therapy, leisure time activities, group and individual counseling, spiritual direction and the resources needed to develop life skills and a personal relationship with God.

personnel issues regarding the cadets and staff officers. We have a tremendous team of officers and employees who work here dedicated to the mission of training the future leaders of The Salvation Army for ministry in the Western Territory. It is a tremendous blessing and at the same time a big challenge to direct a training program of this magnitude.

The College for Officer Training at Crestmont has been offering a training program for officers since the 1930's in the Western Territory. Previously located in San Francisco, California, the college was transferred to its present location in 1975 to Rancho Palos Verdes, California. Crestmont is a beautiful campus located in Southern California overlooking the Pacific Ocean. With breath-taking views it is a perfect setting for study, contemplation and living. What was formally the campus of Marymount College; The Salvation Army has developed the grounds and facilities into a top-notch locale for academic and pragmatic learning. The twenty-two month educational program is accredited by WASC (Western Association of Schools and Colleges) and ACCJC (Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges). The mission of CFOT is as follows: "The purpose of the College for Officer Training is to develop men and women, in knowledge, capabilities, spirit and character, who will be able to sustain and advance the mission of The Salvation Army in the salvation of the world" (*College for Officer Training at Crestmont* 2014).

Cadets (students) come from all over the Western Territory after a thorough application and screening process that includes academic and psychological testing. In the entry process each cadet must have the support of the corps officers, local officers (lay leaders), and divisional headquarter officers. They give witness to a faith in Christ

and a commitment to the mission and ministry of The Salvation Army before they are allowed into the training program. Once they enter the training college, they live and study at Crestmont. All their physical needs are met with a comfortable living space, food, childcare, and transportation. No cadet is allowed to have outside employment as the focus is on their studies and developing their own personal spiritual formation.

Officers and soldiers of The Salvation Army are in a never-ending battle against the twin enemies of sin and despair. The emphasis on a holistic ministry to body, mind and soul is the call placed on the heart of every officer. Leading people into a life changing relationship with Jesus Christ is the passion that drives each Salvationist. Within The Salvation Army resides a culture of doing whatever it takes to meet need at the point of need. This is a 24/7 type of ministry. There is no letup in this war on poverty, sin and despair, no matter what the personal cost might be.

A Driving Force – I'll Fight!

The founder of The Salvation Army, General William Booth, in his last public sermon gave these words that still to this day serve as a driving force and battle cry to Salvationists worldwide:

And now comrades and friends, I must say good bye. I am going into dry dock for repairs, but the Army will not be allowed to suffer, either financially or spiritually, or in any other way by my absence; and in the long future I think it will be seen – I shall not be here to see, but you will – that the Army will answer every doubt and banish every fear and strangle every slander, and by its marvelous success show the world that it is the work of God and that the General has been his servant...While women weep as they do now, I'll fight; while men go to prison, in and out, as they do now, I'll fight; while there is a drunkard left, while there is a poor girl lost upon the streets, while there remains one dark soul without the light of God, I'll fight – I'll fight to the very end!⁷

⁷ Phil Wall, *I'll Fight Holiness at War* (Kent, England: Sovereign World, 1998), 9.

There is need a tremendous sense of internal drive that exists within the soul of each Salvation Army officer to do their very best and to be available to meet the needs of suffering humanity. I recently had a conversation with a retired officer who told me he used to get into trouble with his divisional commander because he was not in the habit of taking time off for either vacation or just plain rest. He told me “It was hard to take time off because I found it such a delight to be engaged in this work as an officer.” This is often a repeated phrase that I hear from active officers when discussing this subject of sabbath. Most officers truly enjoy what it is they do. Helping others brings tremendous satisfaction. The work is a reward in itself.

Today, the life of a Salvation Army officer can become very complex in a relative short period of time. With the ever changes needs that exist within the various communities, budget short falls and the continual growing of human need, an officer can quickly be overcome by the emotional burden and toll this can bring. Compassion burnout is common. This is why an idea of sabbath needs to be introduced to assist the officer with sustaining power to remain in the fight until God places them in “dry dock.”

Obstacles

One of the reasons that sabbath may not be a regular habit in the life of a Salvation Army officer could be for “clerical exemptions.” Some how, when one is doing the most good, one must learn to sleep in his or her saddle while the battle rages on. A good soldier should never rest in the midst of the war on evil. Perhaps that mentality may linger a bit and thus can become a strong hold that may block the idea and application of habitual sabbath keeping. Sabbath rest may be seen as something for “sissies”. A real follow of God keeps on marching through thick and thin.

Another potential problem may be that of generational differences. A stronger work ethic existed in older generations as what one did and how they did it defined who they were. Younger generations have been able to embrace the concept that play must be immersed somewhere in the steady diet of work. There can be a tension that arises where one may be perceived as a “slacker” if time is taken off. The result of that is one may just keep working to ward off any false perceptions of laziness.

Some coming into the ranks of Salvationists do so as they emerge from lives that were lost in addiction to drugs, sex, alcohol and a myriad of other vices. The miracle of these sorts of changes is certainly induced by the grace of God and individual determination. Moving from the language of recovery into the language of redemption is a large step in the spiritual maturing process. Shifting out of a co-dependent lifestyle to one that is dependent on God is easier said than done. Thus the need to be in constant movement might become a barrier for one from a recovery background to stop for sabbath. Suffering is another obstacle that can get in the way of a regular sabbath. Physical pain to emotional strain to the daily realities of having to work several jobs to keep food on the table can all be legitimate hindrances.

Perhaps the biggest challenge for an officer is finding how to practice sabbath while leading others in worship. The weekly celebration service is often the busiest and most stress filled day of the week in an officer’s life. To celebrate the creation of the day within the context of community creates a set of tests that can be overcome with a focus on ceasing and embracing. Celebrating the day in worship is essential for the true partaker of sabbath.

Going Forward

As this dissertation progresses forward the hope is to explore the concept of sabbath more as an important way to understand spiritual formation of the individual and corporate journey. In these busy days where being plugged in 24/7 the need for making space for more rest and reflection is growing stronger now more than ever. The aim here is to remind the reader, in particular, those working within the writer's denomination, that there is a great need to "beware of the machinery" in the tremendous ministry opportunity that God gives. Even though the work of ministry may be 24/7, God's call to us is to consider making it 24/6 on a personal level so that we can be strong in the battle and finish well.

Research Methodology

The author's thesis project was an attempt to explore an existing problem within his particular denomination regarding the sabbath. While "doing the most good" is a terrific mantra to capture the essence of 21st century ministry within The Salvation Army, there are many officers in its ranks, in particular in the western region of the United States, that seem to not take time for regular sabbath keeping. The hope here has been to discover through research what are some of the current trends, traits, statistics, causes and possible cures through these efforts.

The particular areas in the research methodology that was used were related to the collection, deciphering, tabulating and analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data via use of a personal survey. The means and manner in which this was conducted was through an online survey format utilizing SurveyMonkey.com.

The survey used basic descriptive statistical methods to analyze the questionnaire type information that is collected through personal surveys. The report offers various illustrations such as a linear bar graph and statistical charts to highlight some of the findings. The survey was designed to offer some simple yes or no type questions. Answers given to some of the questions were tabulated and recorded in chapter four of this thesis project.

The author entertained at one time the thought about doing individual case studies. However, due to time constraints and the challenges that this would create this idea was scratched from the research project. In order to reach a broader audience, a Facebook group page was created and dedicated to this project where it offered a link to the survey. Numerous soldiers and non-Salvationists took a personal interest in this project with only a very small percentage of individuals not being able to access the survey through this manner. The author has had many inquiries from all over the world in regards to this subject so the thought here is that this might be the best way to allow people to share and keep the entire survey manageable.

Processes

In this dissertation the author attempted explore the problem that faces the individual officer in regards to sabbath knowledge and the lack of application to one's personal life. The plan was to explore the challenge of a Christian institution that respects the corporation ideals of sabbath but the individuals have a difficult time making it a living reality in their lives. The scope of the survey encompassed the active officer force of The Salvation Army, USA Western Territory. Currently there are 750 active officers serving in what is the largest geographical area that The Salvation Army has. Officers

serve in locations as far away as the Marshall Islands to Fairbanks, Alaska to Hobbs, New Mexico. There is a wide range of racial, educational and life experience in the background of the officers to be surveyed. The sorts of appointments that are represented also cover a wide comprehensive scope: corps officers (pastors), Adult Rehabilitation Center (ARC) officers, education officers such as those assigned at CFOT; and administrative officers for regional headquarter offices. The survey was given, however, to any Salvationist who inquired, both lay and officer. Again, this was a very small percentage.

Here is a brief outline of the plan that I used:

1. The plan focused on selecting and conducting a survey of both active and retired officers assigned specifically to the Western Territory region in regards to personal sabbath keeping. (This is the geographic area that I am currently assigned to.)
2. Data was collected from field officers in corps ministry (church), administrative headquarters (denominational district leadership and resource positions), ARC and Social Services officers (drug and alcohol rehabilitation centers and officers assigned to social service ministries) and education officers (CFOT – College for Officer Training).
3. The scope of the plan was to limit the number of this group to get an overall sampling to over 650 active officers assigned to the USA Western Territory of The Salvation Army.
4. The data that was collected represents a wide range of ages, cultural backgrounds, years of ministry experience and educational backgrounds.
5. Data was collected primarily using the digital tools of SurveyMonkey.com.
6. The data was used and analyzed using basic quantitative and qualitative means of explanation.

Survey Questions

The following is a listing of the questions that were asked:

1. What is your gender?
2. What is your ethnicity?
3. What is your role in Salvation Army ministry?
4. How many active years have you given in your ministry role?
5. What is your current appointment?
6. What command are you assigned to in the US Western Territory?

7. What is the best term that defines your understanding of sabbath?
8. Do you practice sabbath on a regular basis in your life?
9. Do you use all your allotted vacation (furlough) time each year?

Summation

As far as the author has been able at this point to discover, no one in the history of his/her denomination has ever fully researched and written extensively on the topic of sabbath keeping. It is felt that the work that is engaged here in this project will be truly beneficial to many Salvation Army officers. After having been able to identify the problem, the plan was to give some very practical and succinct answers going forward as to how sabbath keeping can become a regular part of one's life. The attempt here is to create a dialogue within the confines of this denomination primarily in the Western Territory. But already, this is proving to be a nerve that has been touched in which this work will have some broader ramifications throughout the world wide officer force of The Salvation Army.

Where is this Heading?

The driving focus of this chapter has been the journey of the author in relation to where he has been to being aware of the dangers of ministry which can be seen in the metaphor of a machine out of control. The next chapter (Chapter Two) takes a deeper look into the spiritual formation of a follower of Christ. There are four particular areas that will be explored.

The first is a theological exploration of the terms regeneration, justification and sanctification from a Wesleyan perspective. The next portion will focus on how the pilgrim needs to grow in Christ and how to develop an intimate spiritual life with God. The third portion will discover how to live a life that is inspired by God. The last section

will be a very brief primer on the topic of sabbath which will ultimately lead into succeeding chapters that will include the literature review and then the overall thesis project and conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO

SPIRITUAL FORMATION – A PERSONAL THEOLOGY

Introduction

With great fondness I reflect back to my Catholic religious roots quite often and pay homage to those first exposures on my spiritual journey. Each week as a young child I faithfully attended catechism classes learning about the basics of God, Jesus and the Catholic Church. I would sit next to my parents in church, and remember staring at all the various icons and statues that surrounded the sanctuary. The colors of the stained glass and smells of the candles and incense affected my senses. I never knew the true meaning of all that was said and done in those services, as it was above a young boy's head. I would thumb through the pages of the missal and gaze at the pictures, which I would later come to know were drawn during the Renaissance period. The statues around the sanctuary all seemed to be staring at me in an eerie fashion. I recall that I was very compliant and would dutifully follow the directions of the priest when to kneel and to speak and to sit in silence.

The turning point came when I was able to take my first communion. I knew nothing about theological teaching of transubstantiation or all the “magic” involved with the wine becoming blood or the bread becoming the flesh of Jesus. I couldn't explain the meaning of the Eucharist. All I knew that as a kid I had waited for my whole life to go forward during the church service and get that little wafer placed on my tongue. In order to do that I had to attend classes of catechism and faithfully attend confession with the priest each Saturday morning. I felt like a little godly man each Sunday walking down the aisle, all dressed up with my blue silk clip on tie on. Often I felt I could only make that journey when I had to “make up a sin” to confess about to the priest a day earlier.

My simple goal each week was to get that wafer. Somehow that whole ritual would certainly make me holy at the ripe old age of nine.

My formative teenage years experienced the void of the effects of church in my life. As an entire family we stopped going to church all together. I recently had asked my father the reasons for this. I thought for many years it was over some dark family secret. My dad simply told me he was mad at the church for denying us the opportunity to have a private education due to poor finances. He felt the church was primarily after his wallet and not interested in enhancing his soul. My family had quickly fallen out of the habit altogether, and Sunday observances went from the church setting to the outdoors. We spent many weekends camping, enjoying family time and Mother Nature. I have later come to find out that it is perhaps one of the reasons I would consider myself a naturalist when it comes to one of the aspects in my spiritual temperament. I love the outdoors and find myself very close to God just being in creation.

During this time in my life I knew nothing of prayer or the reading of scripture. The closest thing I came to prayer was to ask God for my favorite sports team to win their games. I knew nothing of the Bible stories and certainly not the need for spiritual transformation in my own life. The teaching of the church remained such a mystery to me. Yet the void that was growing in my soul was obvious by my attempts to find ways to fill it. Whether it was drinking or using mild drugs or listening to metaphysical music, none of which was working.

It wasn't until I was introduced to the idea that Jesus was truly relevant and could make a difference in my day to day living that a light went on in my soul. The words of

the past, those solid words of the gospel, came rushing into my heart and gave me this peace that even to this day I find hard to describe. I have been on this spiritual journey for well over three decades now in my life. Answering a divine call in my life in 1979, I have been faithfully serving as an officer in The Salvation Army since my conversion.

Some of the important lessons I have gleaned along the way are that I no longer seek quick fixes, formulas or pat answers. Many years in the midst of the “mess of ministry” I know there are too many gray areas and trite phrases that tend to ring hollow. Substance of soul is vital. Deconstruction of that “old old story” is essential to keep it relevant in what is fast approaching an age that is hostile to the gospel. Where God is in the midst of despair and despondency is a daily question I am confronted with. My work has taken me to prisons, to the gutters of the cities of the world, to the bedside of the dying, to the outcast, abused and hurting. A simple four way formula or folk theology doesn’t work in the sphere I dwell in. People need concrete answers and need to see the living God in a real way. Maintaining my faith journey needs to be vibrant and lasting.

This all leads me down the path to where I am today. While on retreat at Enders Island, at Mystic, Connecticut, in May 2012, I was challenged to begin to put together a statement of my own personal view of spiritual formation. The following was my attempt at pounding something out: Spiritual formation is a deepening of my faith, rooted in the strength of God’s word, developed in the depth of prayer and reflection, cultivated and acted upon holistically, as I become more like Christ each moment of my journey of life and love.

When I was putting this statement together I was thinking about the structure of our course of study: word - prayer - reflection. I also was thinking how to use it in the context of my thesis project that is pounding around in my head - that of sabbath in the life of a pastor, namely, in the context of the life of a Salvation Army officer.

But now after being saturated with this statement over several months I kept thinking of the relevancy of this in my life now. In all honesty I am finding this as an anchor point as I find myself facing transitions regarding my family, my faith and my future in my ministry. I have been very busy in my life being coached (and now coaching) about “doing” and not necessarily about “being.” I am seeing some of my peers come to the end of their ministry in retirement, shipwrecked or disillusioned. I tend to think that it’s tied to misunderstanding the role of reflection, rest, pondering and sabbath that has been lacking in their daily lives. Of course there are other factors to come into play but I see it as a problem within my culture of ministry that places a heavy emphasis on doing rather than on being. Perhaps that is rooted in the lack of a deep, abiding personal theology of spiritual formation. Could it be tied to a constant need to strive and pursue holy living? Is one never good enough? These are questions with no concrete answers.

My hope as I lay out a working theology of spiritual formation is that I am drawn closer to God in the process and that my heart is cemented firm as I age and face a variety of turbulence and trials along the way. My other hope is that if one person who reads this, whether it is my peers and colleagues in ministry or a simple sojourner on the road of faith, will find words of inspiration and instruction aiding them along the way.

Where this is Leading?

In this dissertation I will be exploring the concepts of the foundations of spiritual formation theology. The format is simple. The focus in the first section is on foundations of formation. Regeneration, justification and sanctification are big theological words that do not roll off the tongue so easily for the common believer, but they are vital pieces to the foundation of spiritual formation. I will approach this from my theological roots from a Salvation Army doctrinal perspective, steeped in Wesleyanism.

The second part focuses on the need to be growing in Christ. How the life of a follower of Jesus Christ must pursue a sincere need to develop a growing sense of intimacy with God. There will be a look into what I call the “so what” of the message. Making some simple suggestions and looking at the practical: how to make space with God in a world and schedule that is already so crowded. How does one develop an open heart before God and lead a life that is learning to listen to Him? Interjected here will be some brief word studies on various scriptures relating to the need to be conformed like Christ.

The third part of this paper will deal with inspiration with God: what living an inspired life looks like. How is that played out in the context of the educational community I am involved with here in my ministry assignment. I will strive to make an attempt to answer the age old question of “how then shall we live?” Then focusing on the “so what” of spiritual formation – how one can make a difference with a well-lived, deep resonating spiritual life in the context of the complexities of the 21st century.

The fourth part will cover a brief summation of a working theology of sabbath. Simply what sabbath is from a scriptural perspective and how it is shaped in the spiritual formation of the follower of Christ on a pragmatic level.

Foundations

The success to any longevity of a building staying in tact over the decades is due to preventive maintenance and resting upon a sure foundation. Where I live in California we are prone to have sudden shifts in the ground: better known as earthquakes. Great attention, care and detail go into making sure any building built in this area has a strong foothold in the earth. Legislation has been put in place by the state of California governing authorities making it a crime if a general contractor does not make sure a building being put into place is not earth quake proof.

Just as a foundation is extremely important to the health of a structure, so is a strong base that put into place in our spiritual lives. Christ is that foundation. The groundwork of our soul is being transformed as we place our trust into Jesus Christ. Soteriology, the nature of salvation, is the doctrine that reminds us of the works of God. Justification, regeneration, and sanctification are the foundational stepping-stones to the path of being made right with God once again.

To be able to build anything on a piece of land is vital. Obtaining property is the first step. The vacant lot of my soul, one that is filled with debris, rubble, thistles and thorns, is the place where it all must begin. That land may not be attractive to anyone but it's the place that God begins his often mysterious and complex work. The renovation of the land is needed. This is where formation must begin. Spiritual formation describes the continuing work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer, which conforms the child

of God more and more to the image of Christ. This work of the Spirit is possible only as we cooperate with God by walking “in the light as He is in the light.”¹ And also by setting our hearts “on things above”;² by ridding ourselves of the “deeds of the flesh”³; and by putting on a heart of “compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.”⁴

Regeneration

The first step in formation of our soul is that of the spiritual birth that must take place in the heart of a person. Regeneration simply means re-birth or the coming of new life. “In New Testament days the word was used to describe such events as the renewal of plant life in the springtime. In Christian doctrine it is used to describe the spiritual rebirth that salvation brings to those who believe in Jesus as Savior.”⁵ It is the impartation of the divine life to the individual who is dead in sin. The work of the Holy Spirit in salvation links us to new life in God. The apostle Paul writes “And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into Christ.”⁶

This is brought about by the work of the Holy Spirit. Common phrases defining this experience would be being “born from above” or “born again.” There are several key texts in scripture that focus in on this matter. Perhaps the most famous story comes from the Gospel of John: “Jesus said, You’re absolutely right. Take it from me: Unless a

¹ 1 John 1:7.

² Colossians 3:1.

³ Colossians 3:8.

⁴ Kenneth O. Gangel and James C. Wilhoit, *The Christian Educator's Handbook on Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997), 39.

⁵ *The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine* (London: Salvation Books, 2010), 128.

⁶ 2 Corinthians 3:18.

person is born from above, it's not possible to see what I'm pointing to—to God's kingdom."⁷

The scripture account reminds us that Nicodemus, a Pharisee, struggled with this strange concept. "How can anyone," said Nicodemus, "be born who has already been born and grown up? You can't re-enter your mother's womb and be born again. What are you saying with this 'born-from-above' talk?"⁸

John Wesley explains that Nicodemus should have known what Jesus was talking about: When an adult Heathen was convinced that the Jewish religion was of God, and desired to join therein, it was the custom to baptize him first, before he was admitted to circumcision. And when he was baptized, he was said to be born again; by which they meant, that he who was before a child of the devil was now adopted into the family of God, and accounted one of his children. This expression, therefore, which Nicodemus, being 'a Teacher in Israel,' ought to have understood well, our Lord uses in conversing with him; only in a stronger sense than he was accustomed to.⁹

Jesus used other metaphors such as the movement of the wind: "The wind blows where it wills."¹⁰ One cannot predict how or when the wind will work. There is a bit of mystery and wonder tied to this concept. Diane Leclerc expounds this when she writes: "Personal awakening is closely connected to repentance in Wesley's scheme; and awakening, if responded to, leads to repentance, faith and regeneration."¹¹

The key thought in all of this is that it was God's plan to build a new relationship in the lives of men and women. This was the promise that God would eventually craft for

⁷ John 3:3 (The Message).

⁸ John 3:4 (The Message).

⁹ John Wesley, "The New Birth: Sermon 45," Connecting the Church in Mission, accessed December 8, 2014, <http://www.umcmmission.org/Find-Resources/John-Wesley-Sermons/Sermon-45-The-New-Birth>.

¹⁰ John 3:8.

¹¹ Diane Leclerc, *Discovering Christian Holiness: The Heart of Wesleyan-Holiness Theology* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2013), 150.

his people, including the Gentiles. This relationship would not be built on the law as found in the Old Testament as the Mosaic way. This new way of relating to God is specifically considered a new covenant. Under the New Covenant, God promised, "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts".¹² When the heart is created, new life comes; and one who is "born again" comes to know God in a totally different and deeply personal way.

Regeneration is also spoken of as becoming a new creature.¹³ The emphasis here is that something is to be distinctly new and not just a reforming of what is there. It is also spoken of as "passing from death to life."¹⁴ This describes a spiritual resurrection occurring in the life of one who believes. Another common idea is "Passing from darkness to light".¹⁵ The benefit of this change is that one will receive eternal life.¹⁶

The difficulty of this doctrine comes from the simple fact that the work of regeneration in the soul is beyond human understanding. Its ultimate proof is found in personal experience. According to John Wesley, the marks of the new birth are found in faith, hope and love.

Wesley writes:

It is that great change which God works in the soul when he brings it into life; when he raises it from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. It is the change wrought in the whole soul by the almighty Spirit of God when it is "created anew in Christ Jesus;" when it is "renewed after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness;" when the love of the world is changed into the love of God; pride into humility; passion into

¹² Jeremiah 31:31, 33.

¹³ 2 Corinthians 5:7; Galatians 6:15.

¹⁴ John 5:24; 1 John 3:14.

¹⁵ John 8:12.

¹⁶ John 17:2.

meekness; hatred, envy, malice, into a sincere, tender, disinterested love for all mankind. In a word, it is that change whereby the earthly, sensual, devilish mind is turned into the “mind which was in Christ Jesus.” This is the nature of the new birth: “So is every one that is born of the Spirit.”¹⁷

Without the new birth in place in the soul of an individual the talk of spiritual formation is mute. The doctrine of regeneration is vital. Diane Leclerc places an emphasis of the Holy Spirit’s role in the work of regeneration when she writes:

It is prevenient grace – the Holy Spirit – that draws us, awakening our souls to the need for God. This grace, as with all grace, can be resisted. But if it is allowed to do its work, prevenient grace and the presence of the Holy Spirit will bring a person to the place of awakening. This is the place where we are convinced of our own sinfulness and helplessness apart from God. But this convincing work of God does not lead us to despair, for we are also convinced of the hope of our redemption...Personal awakening is closely connected to repentance in Wesley’s scheme; and awakening, if responded to, leads to repentance, faith and regeneration. Repentance can be equated with godly sorrow – sorry in the sense that we are convinced of our condition...It is the world of Jesus Christ that makes regeneration possible. The Holy Spirit is active in this regeneration. We are made new creations through the work of the Holy Spirit. Regeneration implies more than justification’s forensic meaning (formally wrought by the atonement) and the familial language of adoption as sons and daughters, and coheirs with Christ. Regeneration implies not only an actual change in relation to guilt or in our relation to the family of God but also an actual change in being. We are new again.¹⁸

Justification

The next foundational step in the converted heart is justification. The basic concept of this term can be simply explained as setting something right. In this case, it is making the relationship between human kind and the Divine right. Milton Agnew writes: “To be justified also means to be acquitted – ‘to be set free from legal charges.’

¹⁷ John Wesley, “The New Birth: Sermon,” *Connecting the Church in Mission*.

¹⁸ Leclerc, *Discovering Christian Holiness*, 150.

To acquit – ‘to refuse to prosecute.’ 2 Corinthians 5:19, ‘God was...not imputing their trespasses unto them.’¹⁹

Justification is an act in which God changes the relationship between himself and us. All individuals are sinful but God declares us righteous because of faith in Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul reminds us, “The God-setting-things-right that we read about has become Jesus-setting-things-right for us. And not only for us, but for everyone who believes in him. For there is no difference between us and them in this.”²⁰ We come to God as we are. We are accepted as we are. From the Protestant perspective it’s important to keep in mind that though as humans we do not deserve this acceptance nor is there anything we can do to earn it or even pay it back. We are given the right to enjoy fellowship with God. “Our justification depends upon the character of God, the saving work of Jesus Christ and our faith in him. God, who is righteous, merciful and true, has reached out in the person of Jesus Christ to save the guilty and helpless. We are acquitted of our sin, accepted by God and our sins are forgiven because God is gracious and merciful. This is the gift of God.”²¹

My faith tradition simply states in one of its cardinal doctrines: “We are justified by grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; and that he that believeth hath the witness in himself.”²² This is further defined: “The believer is therefore justified. This is both a position, which is described by a changed status, as the relationship between God and humanity is restored, and a process, as the relationship continues. Our justification is

¹⁹ *Handbook of Doctrine* (London, UK: The Salvation Army, 1969), 124. Overleaf comments by Milton S. Agnew.

²⁰ Romans 3:22 (The Message).

²¹ *The Salvation Army Handbook*, 164.

²² *The Salvation Army Handbook*, Article 8, 163.

brought about by faith as we accept that the work of Jesus on the Cross has made possible this change of status.”²³

John Wesley strengthens this idea when he writes:

The plain scriptural notion of justification is pardon, the forgiveness of sins. It is that act of God the Father, hereby, for the sake of the propitiation made by the blood of his Son, he "showeth forth his righteousness (or mercy) by the remission of the sins that are past." This is the easy, natural account of it given by St. Paul, throughout this whole epistle. So he explains it himself, more particularly in this and in the following chapter. Thus, in the next verses but one to the text, "Blessed are they," saith he, "whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered: Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." To him that is justified or forgiven, God "will not impute sin" to his condemnation. He will not condemn him on that account, either in this world or in that which is to come. His sins, all his past sins, in thought, word, and deed, are covered, are blotted out, shall not be remembered or mentioned against him, any more than if they had not been. God will not inflict on that sinner what he deserved to suffer, because the Son of his love hath suffered for him. And from the time we are "accepted through the Beloved," "reconciled to God through his blood," he loves, and blesses, and watches over us for good, even as if we had never sinned.²⁴

Diane Leclerc writes of Wesley's thoughts here: "Wesley also certainly believed in justification, just as Luther also believed in sanctification. However Wesley particularly emphasized that salvation goes beyond justification to address the underlying problem or disease."²⁵ The assurance that comes to one who is justified is evident inwardly. An individual can come to know Christ as a present personal savior in their life. "Whoever believes in the Son of God inwardly confirms God's testimony. Whoever refuses to believe in effect calls God a liar, refusing to believe God's own testimony

²³ *The Salvation Army Handbook*, 171.

²⁴ John Wesley, "The Sermons of John Wesley - Sermon 5: Justification By Faith," Wesley Center Online, accessed March 23, 2015, <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-5-justification-by-faith>.

²⁵ Leclerc, *Discovering Christian Holiness*, 176.

regarding his Son.”²⁶ There is nothing that needs to be added to faith in Jesus Christ.

There are no works, no efforts, no magic phrases or exchanging of monetary funds. The Apostle Paul assures us that people of all races and social situations in life have access to God and may come to him to be made new through the provision of his grace. “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”²⁷

Milton Agnew reminds us that the justification of God needed to remain true in line with the character with the Almighty: “There was a need...for some by which God could forgive sins and bring the sinner into loving fellowship with Himself, and at the same time uphold the honor of His law, thus showing the terrible evil of sin, and maintaining His character of justice.”²⁸ Agnew goes on to state the heart of what justification from a Wesleyan perspective:

Paul points out (Romans 5:12) that it is this sinful nature which Adam introduced into the world, “By one man (the) sin (principle) entered into the world”; and that, because of the inheritance of this sinful nature, “all have sinned,” and each has become a sinner, guilty and lost...Rather, because of inheriting a sinful nature from Adam, we became sinners and guilty by our own acts of sin. For that which we are guilty we need forgiveness – that is justification. But of that for which we are not responsible we are not guilty – a sinful nature. For that we need cleansing – that is sanctification.”²⁹

The Holy Spirit gives the inward assurance of adoption: “For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And

²⁶ 1 John 5:10.

²⁷ Galatians 3:28.

²⁸ Agnew, Milton S. *More Than Conquerors* (Chicago, IL: The Salvation Army, 1959), 41.

²⁹ Agnew, *More Than Conquerors*, 53.

by him we cry, *Abba*, Father." ³⁰ The witness of the Spirit in an individual's life is confirmed by the testimony of a changed life. Thus spiritual formation is not a matter of simple verbiage rather it is played out in the process of a changed life.

Sanctification

There is a natural consequence following conversion and that would be learning to live a Christ like life. Sanctification is closely connected with regeneration. For in essence both are concerned with the work of the Holy Spirit: "Don't lazily slip back into those old grooves of evil, doing just what you feel like doing. You didn't know any better than you do now.

As obedient children, let yourselves be pulled into a way of life shaped by God's life, a life energetic and blazing with holiness. God said, "I am holy; you be holy."³¹

Sanctification is the "act and process of being made holy (from Latin "sanctus," "holy", an imitation of and participation in God's own holiness.) There needs to be a spiritual change in the life of a follower of Jesus Christ. This transformational change is known as conversion and it is considered the root of all subsequent development in Christian character.

My particular faith tradition places a great emphasis in the holiness of love and life. The heart 'strangely warmed" similar to what is found in the teaching of John Wesley, Salvation Army theology promotes the idea that crisis and process are involved in the sanctified life. Though this paper is not to either argue or defend the doctrine of entire sanctification, there must be something said about the processing of growing and

³⁰ Romans 8:15.

³¹ 1 Peter 1:14-16 (The Message).

being shaped into Christlikeness by the power of the Holy Spirit, whatever one's theological tradition states. Wesley used the term 'growing toward perfect love of God.'

Milton Agnew paints an interesting historical perspective of the historical development of the concept of sanctification:

But, during the centuries, the church has gone through the experiment of seeking to live the life of holiness by other means. It is not to be wondered at the second century saw an acceptance, for example, of persecution and martyrdom as the true signs of a holy life. There were even those who sought out a martyr's death that they might be known among the saints of the church. A following period gave accent to Monasticism as the main source of Christian perfection. Forgetting Christ's words, "I pray not that Thou wouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil (John 17:15)," the church felt the recluse in the monastery was the true saint. Soon the church added ascetism, on the premise that all evil is of the body, and the man who withdrew from normal bodily life and who mortified the flesh, and who refrained from marriage, received the particular blessings of the Lord. Sacramentalism early made its entry, with the church declaring that men were saved by baptism and forgiven on their post baptismal sins by the Eucharist, or mass. Even ceremonialism and ritualism have their place among some as the chief source of imparting holiness to the worshipper.³²

Agnew continues:

It was John Wesley who sensed in these several methods their inadequacy, their shortcomings, their un-scripturalness, and who proclaimed the scriptural, first century doctrine of sanctification by faith, and that a practice of believing faith must be the cornerstone for a holy life. Now this faith, based on the finished work of the resurrected Christ who "died unto sin once, but...liveth unto God," is the faith that "we shall also live with him" – both here and hereafter. This faith accepts the absolute sufficiency and finality in the death of Christ for all purposes for which He died.³³

³² Agnew, *More Than Conquerors*, 66.

³³ Agnew, *More Than Conquerors*, 66-67.

Christians are called to be set apart, called out of the world for the purposes of God. Still, we are prone to error and wrong doing. Some seek to be holy only by their status when the call to all is to be holy in word and deed. Shaw Clifton writes:

It was one thing to be holy in name or by status, but another for their lives to be holy by results. This is just as true for modern Christians. As soon as you were saved you belonged to Christ. You became holy by status in the same sense that Paul says the far from perfect recipients of his letters were holy. For most Christians the gap between holy status and holy living is at first a very wide one. Growing in grace and in spiritual maturity is about closing that gap, steadily but surely.³⁴

Whatever viewpoint is taken on the matter there is general agreement that sanctification is vital in the life of spiritual formation. “Everyone is in the process of spiritual formation! Every thought we hold, every decision we make, every action we take, every emotion we allow to shape our behavior, every response we make to the world around us, every relationship we enter into, every reaction we have toward the things that surround and impinge on our lives – all of these things, little by little, are shaping us into some kind of being.”³⁵

Diane Leclerc adds some defining comments when she writes:

The Holy Spirit enables the liberating work of God, which finds fulfillment in regeneration, sanctification, and holy living. The Holy Spirit sanctifies believers, initially, progressively, entirely, and finally. That is, it is more than possible to grow in our ability to love God with our whole being and to express the holy love of God to “neighbors as ourselves.” Through the presence of the Holy Spirit, and as God pours out God’s love into the heart, love “excludes sin.” This grace, which heals the dis-ease of sin and empowers us for sacrificial living, is again out of the heart of the holy triune God. The Holy Spirit can indeed make Christians

³⁴ Shaw Clifton, *Never the Same Again: Encouragement for New and Not-so-new Christians* (Alexandria, VA: Crest Books, 1997), 114.

³⁵ M. Robert Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 23.

attitudes the same as Christ Jesus, who emptied himself (kenosis) “of all but love.”³⁶

Growing in Christ

The journey faith is not supposed to be some stagnate experience. One doesn't simply believe in words of a creed or adhere to the doctrines of a certain denomination and find themselves smack dab in the middle of a vibrant life of faith. The idea of spiritual formation is one of fluidity. There is to be movement. There must be action in the heart and growth occurring in the soul, leaving behind the damage of the past and clinging to the hope of the future. It is here that perhaps best here to get some definitions in order. When we refer to spiritual it is necessary to understand this in the context of our soul.

The New Testament writings give us an idea of how formation is supposed to occur. The following is a list of five passages that lay the foundation of spiritual formation and what it is supposed to look like in the life of discipleship, “do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”³⁷

The word for “conform” in the Greek means to fashion or shape one thing like another, to render it like. The essence here is that one must take steps to be a non-conformist against the effects of the world. A dying to self. Shunning off the effects of this world. This must go much further in the life of a follower of Christ. It is more than just putting off the values of the world. This must be firmly planted in the mind and thus

³⁶ Leclerc, *Discovering Christian Holiness*, 151.

³⁷ Romans 12:2.

making a change in our daily actions. The Holy Spirit's presence and power can truly renew the mind and transform the life. One must willfully choose for themselves to center their lives on the things of God or on the things that fade away. "Metamorphoo" or "transformed", is the word Paul uses here to illustrate the need to change. There is to be something different in the life of a follower of Christ. The attitude of resistance sets in the life of the believer. He or she is no longer shaped by the values of the world but by what is valued by God. The Apostle Paul reminded the Galatians of this truth when he wrote: "My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you,"³⁸

The Apostle Paul shows his passion here for the people of Galatia whom he loved. He displayed an intense sense of caring over them that they grow in their life of faith. The word for "formed" in the Greek language is "morphoo". "It refers not to the external and transient, but to the inward and real...expressing the necessity of a change in character and conduct to correspond with inward spiritual condition, so that there may be a moral conformity to Christ."³⁹

The transformed life is to be seen. It is not something that is buried or even confined within walls of a monastery or the safety of a sanctuary. It is to be seen in the nuts and bolts of day in and day out existence. From how we greet and treat strangers to our daily interactions with our fellow workmates. There is something of substance in our actions that have a ripple effect on all we meet.

This is the only place in the New Testament that this word is used.

³⁸ Galatians 4:19.

³⁹ W. E. Vine et al., *An Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words* (Nashville, TN: T. Nelson, 1984), 125.

Becoming a Christian is here depicted in terms of birth and the goal is the fashioning of Christ in man...In order that this Christ-life may come into being in believers, Christ must take form in them. He must in some sense be incarnate afresh in each individual. The nerve of this metaphor, which is based on the development of the child in the mother's womb, is that Christ should come to full growth, to maturity, in the Christian. That this is a process which is never completed in this aeon, that it is both open and secret...⁴⁰

One of the key passages in which Jesus Christ challenges believers into action is found in this classic verse: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."⁴¹

There is a call to action in the transformed life. Spiritual formation is not just to be done in the closet but to be engaged and fulfilled in action in the world. The great commission is the challenge laid down by Jesus to all believers to go and do. The doing is to make disciples, proclaiming the message of the grace, mercy and love of the Father, the sacrificial death of the Son, and the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit.

The holy life is expressed through a healing, life-giving and loving ministry. It is the life of Christ which we live out in mission. God sanctifies his people not only in order that they will be marked by his character, but also in order that the world will be marked by that character...It is the holy love of God, expressed in the heart and life of his people, pointing the world to Christ, inviting the world to saving grace, serving the world with Christ's compassion and attacking social evils. Holiness leads to mission.⁴²

The Apostle Paul further explains this matter in the following passage: "We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we

⁴⁰ Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey William Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 753-54.

⁴¹ Matthew 28:19.

⁴² *The Salvation Army Handbook*, 198.

may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.”⁴³

“Telois” or “perfect,” means here in this verse the idea of being mature or complete. This is not the sense of flawlessness that we would naturally gravitate to in our thinking when we hear the word perfect. The idea in spiritual formation is that we are growing daily and moving forward in a life of love. We are not to be led by our own strength or the misgivings of our own fear or pride. God is at work in us. As we realize this and grow in this fact, the life of the believer reaches out to others in sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. Again the concept of moving forward here in a positive direction is vital. The Apostle Paul clarifies this with the Ephesian believer: “...until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”⁴⁴

The outcome measure of spiritual formation is that of movement. The task for the church is to make disciples in every nation. This includes everything from teaching to healing, giving to admonishing, building to preaching. If we make no disciples or ‘replacements’, we are dead in the water. We have been commissioned to multiply followers of the Christ.

We come as individuals into this life of faith and God molds into community. We are dependent upon one another. We need others in our lives. When we work together with others we begin to express the fullness of spiritual life we can see in Christ. The heart attuned to God will naturally be one that will begin to focus on others. This is the call to the committed. “Everything that God has done, is doing and ever will do in our

⁴³ Colossians 1:28-29.

⁴⁴ Ephesians 4:13.

lives to conform us to the image of Christ is not so that we may someday be set in a display case in heaven as trophies of grace. All of God's work to conform us is to the image of Christ has its sole purpose that we might become what God created us to be in relationship with God and with others.”⁴⁵

What It Is

What exactly is spiritual formation?

Christian spiritual formation requires engagement on the part of the seeker.

James C. Wilhoit writes “Christian spiritual formation refers to the intentional communal process of growing in our relationship with God and becoming conformed to Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.”⁴⁶ The word formation means it is the act or process of forming or the state of being formed. Dallas Willard writes “Spiritual formation in the tradition of Jesus Christ is the process of transformation of the inmost dimension of the human being, the heart, which is the same as the spirit or will. It is being formed (really, transformed) in such a way that its natural expression comes to be the deeds of Christ done in the power of Christ.”⁴⁷

But all of this is a moot point if a person is not willing to do something with their converted heart. It needs life and vibrancy added to the mix. Adele Calhoun asks the question: What do you want Jesus to do for you? “Wanting to work with and watch Jesus is where transformation begins. Willpower and discipline alone can never fix your soul. Striving, pushing and trying harder will not recover your life. Unforced rhythms of grace

⁴⁵ M. Robert Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, 40.

⁴⁶ James C. Wilhoit, *Spiritual Formation as If the Church Mattered: Growing in Christ through Community* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 23.

⁴⁷ Dallas Willard, "Spiritual Formation: What it is, and How it is Done," Dallas Willard: USC Philosophy Professor, Speaker, Author, accessed March 3, 2015, <http://www.dwillard.org/articles/artview.asp?artID=58>.

depend on something more than self-mastery and self-effort. The simple truth is that wanting to keep company with Jesus has a staying power that ‘shoulds’ and ‘oughts’ seldom have.”⁴⁸

Intimacy with God

In order to be able to give out, one must be able to give up. In our spiritual lives the first step is surrender. We put ourselves aside and begin our journey by seeking after a deeper course of direction in our hearts. It begins with a life that desires to know the heart of God. What is it God seeks from us? He desires for us to be close to him.

Intimacy in this day and age is difficult to attain between individuals, let alone between us and God. Marriages fall quickly apart when there is an apparent lack of closeness. With the concept of intimacy there is a sense of vulnerability that one has to put themselves in place to do and give. That involves a great amount of love and trust. When the thought of intimacy is applied in our lives as a follower of God it simply means the deepest part of me needs to connect with the deepest part of God. That goes beyond mere religion. This is what a true relationship with God is about.

This intimacy we seek begins when we pursue God with a whole heart. “When my heart whispered, “Seek God,” my whole being replied, “I’m seeking him!”⁴⁹ The invitation exists to draw close to Him. “Come near to God and he will come near to

⁴⁸ Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 16.

⁴⁹ Psalm 27:8 (The Message).

you.”⁵⁰ The open invitation is there for us to draw closer to God. Yet many are hesitant to do this. J. Oswald Sanders writes,

Both scripture and experience teach that it is we, not God, who determine the degree of intimacy with Him that we enjoy. We are at this moment as close to God as we really choose to be. True there are times when we would like to know a deeper intimacy, but when it comes to the point, we are not prepared to pay the price involved. The qualifying conditions are more stringent and exacting than we are prepared to meet; so we settle for a less demanding level of Christian living.⁵¹

What often hinders us from entering into this deeper relationship with God more times than not is ourselves. For as we come closer to this holy God we are reminded of our sin. We become quickly aware of how insignificant we truly are in the holy presence of God. We tend to want to hold on to things that we know we should let go of. We struggle to maintain our futile grasp on little pet sins that bring us pleasure and passing happiness. It is that sin that breaks our fellowship with God. Our joy is robbed and our witness is nullified.

But there is a simple way back: “On the other hand, if we admit our sins—make a clean break of them—he won’t let us down; he’ll be true to himself. He’ll forgive our sins and purge us of all wrongdoing.”⁵² Confessing our specific sins, honestly before God is at times difficult to do but needed. It is not just a sense of sadness of being found out that should affect our attitude here of letting our sins go but it involves a change of mind. Again it is helpful to remind ourselves of the Apostle Paul’s words to the Romans: “... but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and

⁵⁰ James 4:8a.

⁵¹ J. Oswald Sanders, *Enjoying Intimacy with God* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1980), 14.

⁵² 1 John 1:9 (The Message).

approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.”⁵³ Paul encourages us here that a renewing of our mind has to occur so that action can take place.

A renewing can occur when we begin to be completely honest with ourselves, with others and with God. It leads us to confess our known and unknown shortcomings. Richard Foster writes, “The discipline of confession brings an end to pretense. God is calling into being a church that can openly confess its frail humanity and know the forgiving and empowering graces of Christ. Honesty leads to confession and confession leads to change. May God give grace to the church once again to recover the discipline of confession.”⁵⁴ When we confess we enter into a deeper sense of relationship with God that allows us to cry out with the Psalmist: “Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.”⁵⁵ Augustine of Hippo once said: “The confession of evil works is the first beginning of good works.” It’s a vital step that draws us closer to God.

Making Space for God

I remember one of the first Christian booklets I ever read was written by Charles Hummel entitled, “The Tyranny of the Urgent.” This classic piece was first written in 1967 and has been revised into six studies. His words he wrote continue to speak of great relevance into my life today. “Have you ever wished for a thirty-hour day? Surely this extra time would relieve the tremendous pressure under which we live. Our lives live a

⁵³ Romans 12:2b.

⁵⁴ Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1988), 137.

⁵⁵ Psalm 31:1-2.

trail of unfinished tasks. Unanswered letters (*today it would mean unanswered emails that stack up one on top of the other in the electronic in box! – emphasis mine.*) and unread books haunt the quiet moments when we stop to evaluate. We desperately need relief.”⁵⁶

Making time to develop intimacy with God just doesn’t happen. It has to take on an intentional form in our lives. Dr. Stephen Macchia aptly wrote that, “All in all, time and space have been important priorities for Christians throughout church history. The use of time and space to aid us in our spiritual development is not a new concept. Neither is the abuse or neglect of both. Therefore, there is a desperate need for us to use our time for the specific growth and development of our spiritual lives – the care and nurture of our souls.”⁵⁷ He goes on to further say that “Creating space for God is the number one discipline of the soul and the best place to do that is in our devotional prayer closet (in addition to the complementary of the time we share with God’s people in worship and prayer as a faith community).”⁵⁸

Developing good habits is essential in building and sustaining a relationship with God. Finding time each day for Bible reading and prayer is indispensable in our simple walk of faith. The idea of ‘quiet time’ each day has been a long discipline that allows for one to disconnect from all of the cares, worries and external and internal distractions so that one may connect with God. Even in this busy age we can make time with God. But the question must be asked: do we? Many simple formulas have been suggested but by

⁵⁶ Charles Hummel, *Priorities: Tyranny of the Urgent: 6 Studies for Individuals or Groups* (Leicester: InterVarsity, 1994), 3.

⁵⁷ Stephen A. Macchia, *Crafting a Rule of Life: An Invitation to the Well-ordered Way* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012), 83.

⁵⁸ Macchia, *Crafting a Rule of Life*, 83.

praying for guidance, reading a portion of scripture and close with a time of prayer in the manner of ACTS (adoration, confession, thanksgiving and supplication on behalf of others.) is vital in our sense of connection with God and to bring about a sense of vitality in our spiritual formation.

Hearing God

On my journey of faith over three decades I have never heard the audible voice of God. I often joke with others and say if I ever did you would know that had to have occurred as I would have been liquefied into a pool of goo. But there is something to be said about those who walk close to God are able to hear Him. They know His heartbeat. They know the things that sadden or anger Him. They know the things that bring Him great joy. They are able to steer their lives to the pathway of joy in difficult times. How does this occur? Dallas Willard writes,

...what we know about guidance and the divine human encounter from the Bible and the lives of those who have gone before us shows that God's communications come to us in many forms. We should expect nothing else, for this variety is appropriate to the complexity of human personality and cultural history. And God in redemption is willing to reach out to humanity in whatever ways are suitable to its fallen and weakened condition. We should look carefully at these many forms to see which ones are most suited to the kind of relationship God intends to have with his people.⁵⁹

One very practical and vital way to hear God is through the reading of the sacred text of His word. Learning how to spiritually read the scriptures is known as practicing the art of *lectio divina*. This requires a new way at looking how to read the Word of God and spending time alone with God. It means we do not talk. We are so accustomed to come to God and fill up the quiet with endless chatter. Here we learn to sit in silence and

⁵⁹ Dallas Willard and Jan Johnson, *Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God*, updated and expanded ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012), 26-27.

allow His word to penetrate our hearts. Restraint needs to take place in our lives where we develop the habit of meeting one on one with God.

One shouldn't approach this time with God out of a sense of duty or obligation. Nor should it be viewed as some sort of magic spiritual rabbit's foot one rubs by their daily ritual of meeting with God. I have met people who have expressed to me in no uncertain terms that somehow if a daily quiet time is missed, then that particular day is ruined or bad things happen because they missed it. Things happen in life. Cars break down. Kids act out. Computers freeze up. It's not related by our missing an opportunity to meet with God.

Practicing the presence of God can occur in the busiest of moments. Life is filled with hustle and bustle. Activities abound that crowd out time with God. Adele Calhoun addresses this issue by understanding the concept of slowing: "Hurry particularly affects the way the church does ministry. Expediency and efficiency and desire for quick results can take precedence over the slow, painstaking nature of spiritual growth. Knowing something in the head does not mean it is activated in the heart and life. Growth takes time."⁶⁰

Taking time to pause, reflect, read and listen to the heart beat of God is needed if we are ever to grow deeper in our relationship. In this process we will find ourselves becoming thirsty for God. Bradley Holt writes, "...God's love actively seeks the thirsty. It is as wanderers in a dry land are trying function in a state of dehydration. They do not recognize their need as thirst and may try to fulfill their need for water by eating pretzels

⁶⁰ Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices*, 79-80.

or potato chips. God in this parable is a beautiful fountain running over with the water of life, becoming a river that offers itself to the thirsty, and longs to share its vivifying power.”⁶¹

We desire this time and learn to carve out moments in our day. Perhaps making a special place in our homes where we can sit in silence and be still before the Lord might help us in the process. Try this by finding a favorite chair in a quiet room. Or lighting a candle at the beginning of prayer time. All electronics are turned off and we are tuned into listening to what the Lord may say to us through His word and in our hearts by His Holy Spirit. The idea here is find a physical space and learn to be intentional each day in your moments with God.

Spiritual Formation in the Community

“No man is an island.”⁶² No truer do the famous words of John Donne relate to the house hold of faith. We do not live in isolation from each other. We exist for each other. There is a global interconnectedness today that has been expanding with the use of technology. Now more than ever has our world become smaller. In an age of high tech remains even a great need of high touch. People need one another. Followers of Christ need that sense of connection within the community as well.

God does not shape us into His likeness while we dwell in individual vacuums. It is in the context of community that our life of discipleship and formation is pounded out. What we are able to take in and give out to others is essential in the process of kingdom building. The Apostle Paul gives some words of advice here: “Love from the center of

⁶¹ Bradley P. Holt, *Thirsty for God: A Brief History of Christian Spirituality* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1993), 1.

⁶² John Donne, "No Man Is an Island," Dalhousie University, accessed December 11, 2014, <http://web.cs.dal.ca/~johnston/poetry/island.html>.

who you are; don't fake it. Run for dear life from evil; hold on for dear life to good. Be good friends who love deeply; practice playing second fiddle. Don't burn out; keep yourselves fueled and aflame. Be alert servants of the Master cheerfully expectant. Don't quit in hard times; pray all the harder. Help needy Christians; be inventive in hospitality",⁶³

It is within the community of believers that God can teach us many vital lessons through the words and actions of others. These lessons shape and guide us into the proper paths we can take. We find encouragement, accountability, support and guidance, to name just a few, when we submit ourselves to living within a spiritual community. We need to be engaged in the lives of others not only for our own soul's sake but for what we can build into the lives of others.

In the context of community our directional questions are often answered. What does God want from me? What is His will for my life? How do I know if I am going the right way with this choice of career or companion? Gordon Smith writes:

We never discern in isolation; we discern in community. Every significant choice we make reflects the fact that we are profoundly interconnected with the lives of others. Our decisions inevitably affect others but we are also affected by the choices that others make. It is only appropriate that we are accountable to others in our choices; others need to be able to challenge us and confirm whether what we believe to be God's will is truly of God. We need the wisdom and counsel of others.⁶⁴

Life in spiritual community is one that is deep and abiding. There is a sharing that is to occur that affects us on levels difficult to explain:

⁶³ Romans 12:9-13 (The Message).

⁶⁴ Holt, *Thirsty for God*, 150.

Concrete and specific acts of devotion filled Jesus' devotional life. The devotional acts of Jesus were rich and diverse...He did not simply keep an abstract communion with God but rather carried out his communion through tangible acts of piety and intimacy, which included listening and speaking to the Father...Just as human relationships are marked by well-developed patterns of interacting, so also our relating to God should be marked by rich, diverse and consistent patterns.⁶⁵

What God is doing in my life and with my life is important to others in the body of Christ. My experiences whether they are good or bad can testify to the effective working presence of God in my life and can bring encouragement to others. Paul reminds the believers in Corinth: "He comes alongside us when we go through hard times, and before you know it, he brings us alongside someone else who is going through hard times so that we can be there for that person just as God was there for us."⁶⁶ My experiences will have an effect on others in the community of faith.

Bradley Holt writes, "Christian spirituality has a special place for other people who share the faith. It is not only personal but communal. The Bible does not know of separating individuals from the people of Israel or from the church; our relations with God are as members of a body, not as isolated individuals...The gifts of the Spirit are given to the community, not to just individuals."⁶⁷

We are seeking friendships that are lasting and loving. What do these sorts of spiritual friendships look like in community? Dr. Stephen Macchia writes,

Spiritual friendships come in different forms. They can form through relationships with our peers as well as with coaches, counselors, mentors, disciplers and pastors. They can be comprised of one on one relationships, triads, small groups and large groups. They form at different seasons of

⁶⁵ Wilhoit, *Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered*, 40.

⁶⁶ 2 Corinthians 1:4 (The Message).

⁶⁷ Holt, *Thirsty for God*, 20.

love and are more meaningful during times of great need. No matter what our situation is, spiritual friends are gifts from God and are to be treated with respect, honor, gratitude and joy.⁶⁸

A Sabbath Primer

A very vital key to one's spiritual formation is the inclusion of sabbath rest. The four basic components of sabbath are found in the following words: ceasing; resting; celebrating and embracing. These are explored in greater detail in chapter three of the literature review. We read in Genesis 2:3 that the sabbath day was at the beginning something to be intended as special for all of creation: "And God blessed the sabbath day and made it holy, because on it he ceased from all the work of creating that he had done."⁶⁹ The Hebrew word for sabbath is a verb, "shabbat", which means in its purest form to cease and desist. The sabbath was to be observed for future generations as a sign between the Israelites and God as a reminder that He stopped and rested. So should they.⁷⁰

The benefits of observing and maintaining sabbath rest are wide. It is essentially vital to our hearts spiritual formation that the habit of ceasing and resting is incorporated into our living. Marva Dawn gives the best simple definition of making ceasing important in our journey. She writes:

We will consider many aspects of sabbath ceasing – to cease not only from work itself, but also from the need to accomplish and be productive, from worry and tension that accompany our modern criterion of efficiency, from our efforts to be in control of our loves as if we were God, from our possessiveness and our enculturation, and, finally, from the humdrum and meaninglessness that result when life is pursued without the Lord as the center of it all...A great benefit of sabbath keeping is that we learn to let God take care of us – not by becoming

⁶⁸ Macchia, *Crafting a Rule of Life*, 152.

⁶⁹ Genesis 2:3.

⁷⁰ Exodus 31:16-17.

passive and lazy, but in the freedom of giving up our feeble attempts to be God in our own lives.⁷¹

Stopping is commanded. Resting is vital. Celebrating our lives in God is worthy. Embracing all the gifts given to us is timely. Sabbath must play a central role in Much more will be revealed about this whole idea of living our lives in an unhurried manner before the Lord within the context of this dissertation. Much more will be said in regards to a proper theological understanding of sabbath in literature review of chapter three.

There is of course, a scriptural mandate for sabbath. We find this as the case when God created: "By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creation that he had done."⁷² To this end John Wesley comments:

In these words three things are plainly affirmed: (1), that God is the creator of the world; (2), that having created it in six days he ceased from his work on the seventh; (3), that hereon he blessed the seventh day, and hallowed, or sanctified, it, ordaining that man, being made in the image and for the imitation of God, should imitate him in this, in bestowing six days on the works pertaining to this world, and resting from all these works on the seventh, to retire to a better world.

We see here the chief reason of this command, the great end for which it was given, even that man might learn to imitate God, to fulfill the purpose of his creation; that he might ever remember who it was that created himself, and heaven and earth; that like him, having finished his six days, he might on the seventh retire from this world, and ascend in heart and mind into the heaven of heavens, whither his Creator went in person before him.⁷³

⁷¹ Marva J. Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Holy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989) 3, 4.

⁷² Genesis 2:2-3.

⁷³ Stephen Flick, "John Wesley on the Sabbath," Christian Heritage Fellowship, accessed March 23, 2015, <http://christianheritagefellowship.com/wesley-on-the-sabbath/>.

The creation account reminds us of the special place humankind is in the eyes of God. We are reminded that God didn't intend us to be machines or even machine like in our existence and behavior. As He rested from all of his labors so shall we.

We are reminded that keeping the sabbath is a commandment: "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy."⁷⁴ In a very helpful article that articulates the modern problem with adapting this commendation into ones real life, Nancy Sleeth writes:

For those of us who believe in the Creator, the Ten Commandments are gifts from the very hand of God. The first three commandments are about our relationship with the Lord. The last six are about our relationship with humanity. The fourth commandment is a bridge: it connects heaven and earth, God and people. Once a week, God walks out on the Sabbath bridge to meet us. But most of us are no-shows; we unapologetically stand up the Creator of the universe, week after week.⁷⁵

It's easy to forget the simple fact that sabbath keeping was up there with all of the other commands. Maybe because it is as Sleeth points out, a bridge idea that connects our relationship with God versus our own humanity, thus it's easy to neglect and minimize it as a command. Isaiah gives us a solemn reminder:

If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the LORD's holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, then you will find your joy in the LORD, and I will cause you to ride in triumph on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Exodus 20:8.

⁷⁵ Nancy Sleeth, "The Most Ignored Commandment," *Relevant*, February 20, 2015, [Page #], accessed March 23, 2015, <http://www.relevantmagazine.com/god/practical-faith/most-ignored-commandment>.

⁷⁶ Isaiah 58:13-14.

This verse is a simple reminder that we honor God when we enter into rest. Our physical and spiritual health is restored and maintained. A natural progression that would follow this is to find ones family life becomes stabilized and in check.

Entering into sabbath rest can bring about liberty in one's spirit. Jesus reminded the disciples: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."⁷⁷ The term here gives the connotation to both rest up and to cease from labor. This is the way of the life of the disciple of Christ. It's a simple reminder to embrace the moments of rest that are ours and then to be fully engaged in the duties that we are called to do. In order to do the work there must be a balance and rest is always the counter balance of what God has in mind. Taking his yoke, to learn and acquire the habit of what it means to rest in God. This comes quickly when we begin to grasp that again sabbath was made for us and not the other way around.⁷⁸ Rest is a good thing.

Spiritual Formation in a Formal Christian Education Community

My current ministry assignment with The Salvation Army is to give oversight to one of our training colleges (or seminary) in the United States. Located on the cliffs overlooking the grand Pacific Ocean in the city Rancho Palos Verdes, California, The Salvation Army has been training 'cadets' or 'officers in training' at this location in the western part of the United States since 1975. Previous campuses existed within the city of San Francisco, tending back to the early 1930s.

⁷⁷ Matthew 11:28.

⁷⁸ Mark 2:27.

My role at this training college⁷⁹ is Principal (president). I give leadership to an officer and employee staff of approximately seventy-five individuals. Currently we have 125 students enrolled, which is currently the largest in The Salvation Army world.⁸⁰ Our operating budget is nine million dollars a year. I have been in administration of this college since 2006 previously as Assistant Principal. I have been in my role as Principal since March 2011. I am very familiar with our core values and course curriculum as well as the ins and outs of what these students will face in their future ministries on the field. The heart of what we do here is spiritual formation in the lives of individuals who are committing themselves to a life of selfless service within the ranks of The Salvation Army. One of my passions and personal goals in my administration of this college is to make sure every student is well grounded in their faith and have a deep, abiding personal experience and relationship with God.

The purpose of our ministry at this college is very straight-forward: “The supreme aim of training shall be to develop officers of such Blood and Fire spirit that they will be enabled to sustain and advance the purposes of The Salvation Army.”⁸¹ This is not just a trite saying or slogan. This is what we are in existence for. This is the overall purpose of The Salvation Army Training Colleges worldwide as noted in the Orders and Regulations for Officer Training.

This is further defined in what we hope to generate: “To produce officers who:

1. know God (as evidenced by holiness of heart, purity of life, prayer, witness, service, sacrifice, nobility of character, and quality of living..
2. Know themselves (know their

⁷⁹ An accredited college offering a two year Associate of Arts degree in Ministry.

⁸⁰ September 2012.

⁸¹ College for Officer Training at Crestmont, "Personnel Manual," 2012, 7.

own strengths and how to direct them, know their own weaknesses and how to overcome them, know their potentials and how to develop them. 3. Know their mission.

Understanding the implications of God's call to officership, understanding the nature and mission of The Salvation Army; understanding their commitment to The Salvation Army and their place within it; sharing the burden of the world's sin and suffering; desiring above self, comfort, recognition and all else, the glory of God and the salvation of the world."⁸²

These are indeed noble if not very broad based spiritual goals as we prepare men and women for battle against sin in the world. This does not come about by mere pep talks and staring at mission statements plastered on the walls. We make a concentrated effort within this community to place a great deal of emphasis towards the spiritual formation of each individual. We pursue the development of a deepening, maturing relationship with God by promoting prayer, the study of the scriptures, reflection and mediation of the word, and worship, private and corporate.

We place each student in gender specific discipleship groups that are led by trained and experienced staff officers who uphold the ideals of Christian living. These groups meet each Wednesday afternoon during the academic year for prayer, confession, accountability, encouragement and the study of God's word. Richard Foster's "Celebration of Discipline" and Dr. Stephen A. Macchia's "Crafting a Rule of Life" are examples of the variety of different books that the students can choose from to better their spiritual well-being. These books are used in the context of their discipleship groups for guidance and discussion.

⁸² CFOT Personnel Manual. 2012, 7.

We also have required chapel attendance twice a week. These chapels are student led and are often very creative and spiritually stirring. There are prayer meetings and other programming that occurs that allow the cadets to grow and mature in their faith. Spiritual formation is taken out of the theory of talk in the classroom and stressed in the down and dirty aspects of real living. It is there where we see differences made as hearts are committed to knowing God on a more intimate level. This will only better prepare these individuals for the rigors of ministry that lay ahead. Having a firm grasp on my own personal spiritual formation theology is vital in the process of my vision and management of this college. Effecting the future work in the part of the vineyard God is leading these individuals is always in the back of my mind and on top of my heart.

Summation

The hope that I have attempted to express is that when one has a firm grip on the essentials of spiritual formation theology, evidence of a changed life is the result. There is confidence to stand firm and courage to move forward. It's important that all Christians have a securely grounded faith and have a thorough understanding of the nature of Jesus Christ. To know what one believes in and why is essential. When this is understood it will bring depth and substance to any personal spiritual experience. Worship and praise becomes more meaningful. There is a greater sense of clarity and commitment to the mission of the church. There is a greater sensitivity to direction and purpose in one's life. It will lead to the example of holy living. The call to radical discipleship living is heeded. Growth in one's likeness of Christ will begin to occur. A model of compassion will be followed. And commitment to mission will be embraced.

Bradley Holt tells the story of a monk who was given thirty seconds to describe life in his monastery for a television interviewer. “We fall down, then we get up. We fall down, then we get up. We fall down, then we get up. We fall down, then we get up...”⁸³ This journey of faith is all about battles, trials and tribulations, and the pursuit of perseverance. One never becomes perfect in this process but one must keep moving.

I discovered many years ago an ancient Japanese proverb that says, “Never be afraid of moving slowly, be afraid of never moving.” Spiritual formation in the life of the believer is fluid. It is moving. There is molding and shaping occurring. It is pounded out day-by-day, moment-by-moment, in good and bad times. A metamorphosis has begun in the life of the one committed to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. That is spiritual formation in process.

Where is this Heading?

With the conclusion here of a focus on spiritual formation we now turn in the next chapter to a more detailed explanation of sabbath. Chapter three is the literature review where we will explore this topic and engage with various authors and experts in this particular theological topic.

⁸³ Holt, *Thirsty for God*, 126.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

“Rest even from the thought of labor.” - Abraham Herschel

“Sabbath dissolves the artificial urgency of our days, because it liberates us from the need to be finished.” - Walt Mueller

“Primarily, I have lost my soul to one of the chief rivals of devotion to Christ – that is, service for Him.” - Howard Baker

“The soil of the soul must be tended to and that often is looked after in the slower moments of life.” - Tim Foley

Introduction

What follows is the literature review portion of the dissertation on the topic of “The Salvationist & the Sabbath.” Numerous books, articles, journals, and periodicals were read, reviewed and thumbed through in preparation for this project. While not an exhaustive approach, I read enough material on the subject of sabbath and have attempted here to give a fair engagement on the matter. A full confession is in order at this stage: I am not the same person I was when I first started on this thesis project. My soul has forever been shaped by my encounter with the various authors and the theology of sabbath that has been presented to me.

The topic of sabbath¹ is one that is trending in all of Christendom these days. No matter what the living generation is, theological persuasion, geographical location, ethnicity, gender or age, this topic is as timely as ever. The topic strikes a nerve and activates the vocal chords of many. This matter can easily trigger passionate responses that can be enlightening, engaging and troubling at the same time. The myriad of information that is available on sabbath, with the simple push of a button or the turn of the page is vast and somewhat overwhelming. This can add to the confusion and the perplexity about the subject.

For the sake of this project, the focus on this review is centered on the concepts of the rhythm of sabbath: ceasing, resting, celebration and embracing. I have attempted here to engage with a few selected authors of books and periodicals on the subject that would zero in on these specific issues. I have tried to intertwine these themes within the parameters of sabbath, with each other and arrange my own thinking from my life experience in my own particular ministry context.

Often within the confines of the Christian Church, the topic of sabbath is loaded with controversy, legalistic expectations that almost border on the fence of spiritual arrogance, to mere avoidance of the matter. I have often thought to myself, “I do not have time to rest for the world is in need of salvation. I am too important for that cause to stop.” Thus, I easily tap into my false self here that I am bigger than a direct command from God to slow down and rest. I have chosen here to avoid the path of debate and legalism and have instead chosen to direct the attention of the reader to what various

¹ Lower case “s” is used when referring to sabbath in general terms. Upper case “S” is used when used in reference to a particular day.

authors have written on the matter of sabbath in this regard. The great lesson I have learned in all of this is that embracing the sabbath is all about intentionality and getting to understand the cadences of God.

The context for this project is my denomination, The Salvation Army. After giving three decades of my life, primarily in the Western Territory of the United States of America, in the service of suffering humanity and the salvation of souls, I am convinced more than ever, that The Salvation Army on a worldwide basis needs to take a new look at the topic of sabbath. I have hit a “hot topic button” in my own exploration, project survey, individual discussions and reading of this matter within The Salvation Army. If anything, the various books and articles I have read on this subject has given me new life in exploring the issue of sabbath in my own personal spiritual journey. I have often thought, “Once I finish studying, reading and writing on sabbath, I will practice it.” I might get around to reading my own thoughts and putting them in the application of my journey eventually. I openly and unashamedly confess I am still quite the novice in the engagement of sabbath in my own life. Happily, that is changing.

As a result of my study on this topic I am hoping that the following will be a catalyst of sorts. I hope to be a source of encouragement to my fellow Salvation Army officer and soldier comrades to inspire them to take up the topic of sabbath for discussion but more importantly, that it be considered once again as a way of life that is not to be shunned. To cease, to rest, to celebrate and to embrace the sabbath is what God intended for His creation in the first place.

I trust the following information is helpful to both novice and the well-traveled pilgrims amongst us. But I do cast out this caveat – may the reader beware: I have only scratched the surface of the information and knowledge that is available.

Ceasing

The term ceasing is a foreign concept to me. It has certainly been the opposite in how I have viewed myself in over three decades of ministry. I hardly know what the definition means. Even in the days where I have scheduled a disengagement of sorts, the tyranny of the urgent always looms over my mind. Work matters rise up in my imagination when I am sitting still. A mental to do list grows rapidly, as I think about all that must be done. The challenge for getting the list cleared is more important than to just let the list sit and ferment.

Marva Dawn comments on the idea of ceasing: “The more we think about resting, the more we realize that we have to set many things aside to engage in it. We can’t truly rest if our minds are going at supersonic speed. We can’t genuinely savor a sabbath day if we insist on ‘accomplishing’ thing, even if we do it for God.”² One of the most profound thoughts I have read on this whole concept truly resonates with the problem that exists within me as I interpret my ministry mission. This thought comes from Howard Baker when he pointedly states: “Primarily, I have lost my soul to one of the chief rivals of devotion to Christ – that is, service for Him.”³ How ironic it is that even my own devotion to service in the Kingdom of God can lead to my own downfall by refusing to stop and engage in the discipline of ceasing.

² Marva J. Dawn, *The Sense of the Call: A Sabbath Way of Life for Those Who Serve God, the Church, and the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 2006), 46.

³ Howard Baker, *Soul Keeping: Ancient Paths of Spiritual Direction* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1998), 34.

Sabbath is all about stopping. Desist. It is the simple foregoing the need to forge on and complete the long to do list I may carry around in my hand. Thomas Merton writes about stopping:

There are times, then, when in order to keep ourselves in existence at all we simply have to sit back for a while and do nothing. And for a man who has let himself be drawn completely out of himself by his activity, nothing is more difficult than to sit still and rest, doing nothing at all. The very act of resting is the hardest and most courageous act he can ever perform: and often it is quite beyond his power.⁴

Changing the title of my “to do list” to a “to be done later list” is a step in the right direction. Giving myself permission to stop is vital. I work in a ministry where stopping has not been cultivated nor is it talked about. But, for most of us, if we are completely honest we do not stop. We either do not choose to, or we do not know how to cease. Or, we think that somehow we are so significant to the operation of our little worlds that if we simply stop for one moment, its axis will tilt and all will be lost.

Perhaps, it is not within our sphere of understanding to know that learning how to cease and stop is vital for what lies ahead in our personal journey. Even the sprinter must cease from all training and competition from time to time in order to be fit, rested and restored for the next race. The simple reality is this: there is never enough time to get everything done. The sooner one comprehends this; the better off one will be in the long run. But, the fact of the matter is we do not let this pursuit go. Learning to cease is a challenge for the 21st century warrior.

Donna Schaper writes, “Sabbath is the separation of work from play, leisure from obligation, and duty from grace. It used to be a day now it is a pattern. Sabbath is being

⁴ Thomas Merton, *No Man Is an Island* (Boston, MA: Shambhala, 2005), 123.

off in a world where the eleventh commandment is to be on.”⁵ She hits the nail on the head here with the comment of the unwritten eleventh commandment, which has become the new normal in most first world settings. Even while on vacation, the need to be plugged in is great.

Successful entrepreneurs are under this sort of pressure of yes, take your vacation but don't you dare unplug. Cliff Oxford writes:

My advice is if you want to relax and recharge with peace of mind then you better stay 'plugged in' – at least on what I call on low voltage current – to what is happening at work while you are away. Believe me, I am not trying to be the evil work genius that takes away your precious vacation time just so we get another hour or two of work done. In this case, staying plugged in is not about productivity. It is about peace of mind...we have simply reached a point where staying currently connected to work even while on vacation, a long weekend or a day off is less nerve wracking and more relaxing than unplugging with a hard shutdown of 'getting away from it all.' I don't think there is any such thing as totally unplugged anymore.⁶

I have personally wrestled with this topic. The demands of my job require a response even when I am away. People know I am on vacation. It's not a secret. I inform my staff and my administrative assistant of my whereabouts beforehand. I offer the open door when I say, "If you need me, call." Sometimes I will get the occasional phone call where I hear the words: "I know you are supposed to be vacation, but so and so issue has come up and needs addressing. Can I get just five minutes of your time?" When I look at my work email while on furlough, instantaneously I am drawn back into the fray. Often, it has been my experience that any type of rejuvenation I may have

⁵ Donna Schaper, "Sabbath for Clergy," *The Clergy Journal*, May 2008, 12.

⁶ Cliff Oxford, "Real Entrepreneurs Don't Unplug To Recharge," *Forbes*, last modified July 10, 2014, accessed December 1, 2014.

experienced has come to an immediate screeching halt. And thus, I find I am right back a square one, minus the peace of mind, which is opposite of what Cliff Oxford states here.

When the secular world authors are stating is that there is no such thing as being totally unplugged any more, then how in the world does even the thought of ceasing enter into the dialogue anyway?

Day Off?

Sabbath rest is different from the ordinary day off. The norm of the typical week for an individual engaged in pastoral ministry varies and shifts depending on situations, crises or other pressing matters that arise. Pastors often struggle with the challenge of attempting to take time away for reflection and rest when the norm never formalizes. Afraid of losing face or the pressure of being a part of a culture being on 24/7, can consume the heart of a pastor. In her article entitled, "Sabbath for Clergy", Schaper advocates for the need for clergy to take two days off a week. She writes, "Clergy may never have a predictable and regular period of time off, but they always need to have two full days off. The days may come as soccer on Thursdays and opera on Tuesdays. But they still need a total of two days or four units (a unit being a morning or an afternoon). Otherwise our work will suffer, our parish will suffer, and we will burn out." She goes on to stress some very practical reasons why this should be the case: "Because we need two days off, one for the laundry and one for sabbath...On a regular basis, we should work mornings and nights or afternoons and nights, never both, and never both six or seven days in a row."⁷ To help free the mind of the clergy member from any irrational guilt she continues: "Remember the norm. Remember what other people work. Imagine

⁷ Schaper, "Sabbath for Clergy," 12.

your humanity and work like you are ‘other’ people, not more and not less.”⁸ The practical reality is many ministry settings may prevent this happening, but the concept is worth considering and applying where applicable. This may be the ideal that can work in one ministry setting while the person who reads about this concept may feel guilty because of the reality of the demands in their particular setting prevents them from doing so. Again, finding a balance, as cliché as it seems, needs to be struck.

For instance, outside of taking furlough, I have never been able to find a way to habitually put two days together to take off in over three decades of full time ministry service. Does that mean I am at odds with the command of God? No. It simply means that I am not able to do this ideal. I am envious of those who can. But my focus is on what I can do, when I can do it and make sure I engage in a deep, meaningful sabbath in the process.

All work and no time for play can lead to an innumerable amount of complications from health and mental issues to the rise in anxiety and depression. Living life understanding that there are always crises to attend to, paper work to shovel and obligations to fulfill can lead us into what Schaper calls forgetting to be a human being and becoming a “human doing.” In order for you to get your life in order, you need to work ahead and reveal in the reality of flextime. She writes, “Accept that you are swimming upstream. Understand that the true keeping of sabbath is an act of nonviolent civil disobedience. Expect punishments. Expect suspicion. Expect and anticipate the guilt trip of ‘she’s not working as hard as I am.’ Be ready to have a good laugh next time

⁸ Schaper, *Sabbath for Clergy*, 12.

someone tells you that you only work on Saturday or Sunday. Have compassion for it.”⁹
Often the servant of God struggles with the idea that when I relax, I feel guilty.¹⁰

Often times the biggest obstacle that lies in the way of grasping on to the concept of ceasing is ourselves. I have struggled with the fact that when I relax I may feel as if I am wasting time, while other things must be naturally attended to. I like the terminology that Adele Calhoun uses in place of the word, ceasing. She used the phrase “slowing.” In her classic handbook on spiritual disciplines she writes a definition of this term: “Slowing is one way to overcome inner hurriedness and addiction to busyness. Through slowing, the sacrament of the present now is tasted to the full.”¹¹ The metaphor of slowing down and pulling over to the lane where the traffic moves about at lower speeds comes to mind here. Driving at supersonic speeds to get from point A to point B has its place and certainly has merit. But one cannot always drive that fast, if there is to be any enjoyment in the journey.

On a recent trip to Japan my wife and I took a “Bullet Train” from Tokyo to Kyoto. Traveling at super-fast speeds of over 200 miles an hour, everything passing out the window became a blur. The scenery goes by so fast there is no time to focus on its beauty that cannot be seen in the fuzziness. Thus in our spiritual journey things can simply become out of focus when we are in too much of a hurry to move on long to origins and destinations unknown.

⁹ Schaper, *Sabbath for Clergy*, 12.

¹⁰ See Tim Hansel, *When I Relax I Feel Guilty* (Elgin, IL: D.C. Cook Pub., 1979), for some exceptional comments of this common occurrence for ministry workers.

¹¹ Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us*, 77.

Adele Calhoun continues to explain her definition: “Slowing is a way we counter our culture’s mandate to tend to the bottom line, to move it or lose it, to constantly be on the go. It is a way we honor our limits and the fact that God is found in the present moment. Through slowing we intentionally develop margins in our lives that leave us open to the present moment.”¹² This is truly counter cultural to the stream that flows fast and freely in our present age.

There is a quote in this section of her book where Peter Kreeft makes a comment that is worth noting: “If you can’t take time to do nothing, you’re a slave to doing. Doing nothing is a radical, revolutionary act. It frees you from the universal slavery of our age; slavery to the clock. The clock measures doing but not being.”¹³ The tyranny of the urgent can often be seen as a trite and over-used phrase but it certainly is a relevant concept when I hear the clock ticking and various deadlines looming in the distance. Thoughts of ceasing and slowing and doing nothing are far from the top of the accomplishment list.

The opposite of ceasing is hurrying. “Hurry particularly affects the way the church does ministry. Expediency and efficiency and desire for quick results can take precedence over the slow, painstaking nature of spiritual growth.”¹⁴ The spirit of hurry can lead us down the road of stunted growth in our journey. Things take time to process and prosper. Nothing good can come out of rushed growth. The soil of the soul must be tended to and that often is looked after in the slower moments of life. We have the chance to breathe, which allows for the opportunity to digest and think through matters.

¹² Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices*, 78.

¹³ Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices*, 77.

¹⁴ Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices*, 77.

But what is it we are ceasing from? The sabbath calls us to stop working. “Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the lord your God; you shall not do any work –you. Your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien in your towns.”¹⁵ Dawn says very simply that, “The sabbath is a day to abstain totally from whatever work is our work at the time.”¹⁶ Defining what is work often comes into play here. What some may consider to be an abomination on a sabbath day others may find great pleasure in. Lynne Baab clarifies: “Do you work for pay? If so, then stopping any job activities on your sabbath is a good place to start.”¹⁷

She goes on to state her definition of what work looks like to her: “I began observing the sabbath while I was a homemaker, and for me housework, mostly shopping and gardening are work. Paying bills and managing money feel like work. I try to exercise diligently almost every day. Exercise feels like work.”¹⁸ She lets the reader peek into a window of her daily life:

On my Monday sabbaths I do exactly what Marva Dawn suggests. I avoid the work that is mine at the time. On Mondays I do almost nothing related to my paid or unpaid work. I seldom turn on my computer, even to write an email to a friend, because the computer is such a large part of my work week. Sometimes I answer the phone, but I often left the answering machine pick up because the phone is also associated with my work.

Here Baab touches oh so briefly on the issue of technology and how it plays out when one is taking a sabbath. There is a grass-movement that started in 2002 called the

¹⁵ Exodus 20:9-10.

¹⁶ Dawn, *The Sense of the Call*, 54.

¹⁷ Lynne M. Baab, *Sabbath Keeping: Finding Freedom in the Rhythms of Rest* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 54.

¹⁸ Baab, *Sabbath Keeping*, 54.

National Day of Unplugging. From their website the following can be found about their purpose: “The National Day of Unplugging is a 24 hour period – running from sundown to sundown – and starts on the first Friday in March. The project is an outgrowth of The Sabbath Manifesto, an adaption of our ancestors’ ritual of carving out one day per week to unwind, unplug, relax, reflect, get outdoors, and connect with loved ones.”¹⁹ There has become more of an intentional dialogue about the crippling influence in modern culture about how technology has such a strong hold on people. It affects everything from sleep to sexual activity to disorders of every shape and size. Turning off the phone and computer is a traumatic experience for some.

I have recently been convinced of the fact that I am addicted to my electronics. Case in point: I have trouble sleeping. It was recommended that I download a particular app for my phone that would monitor my sleep patterns. I place my phone under my pillow at night so it will ‘track my sleep habits.’ Why am I surprised to find out when I first wake and consult the sleep app on my how restless my sleep actually was? Is it truly natural to sleep with my phone under my pillow?

My addiction continues. I shoot emails off constantly. I have to have all my emails read by the top of the hour. Heaven help me if I have an unread email in my inbox. I constantly check sports scores, my Facebook status, my twitter feed. On and on it goes. I am a slave to technology and when I lose connection, whether it is at 35,000 feet when flying or hitting a dead zone in cell coverage on my way to the grocery store, I can mentally fall apart. The need for connection is vital, but the great need is to unplug is needed now more than ever.

¹⁹ "About," National Day of Unplugging, accessed December 2, 2014, <http://nationaldayofunplugging.com/about-us/>.

Many offer the suggestion that when the sabbath comes one should consider completely leaving personal electronic devices turned off. Leonard Sweet mentions that in his home all electronics are prohibited at the dinner table. Some make a box available where the cell phones, tablets and laptop computers are placed at the beginning of sabbath.

Ceasing from work may also include limiting the use of written and vocal abilities. Baab gives a unique thought to consider in this regard: “As I have asked myself what I need to cease from, I have come to realize that my workweek is dominated by generating words. Words I speak on the phone, in meetings and in public. Words I write on the computer in emails, church newsletters articles...On the sabbath I need freedom from producing words, both spoken and written.”²⁰ She goes on to elaborate on the benefits of considering sabbath rest in this way: “My current sabbath, spent alone, helps meet that need. I take time to notice the beauty of the world around me, thanking God in a wordless way for the wonder of his gifts to us. I spend time reflecting on my life without the need to put anything into words.”²¹

Pausing to reflect and rest like this allows for the lessening of worries and anxiety. But it also can create space where the negative thoughts can creep in. Dorothy Bass gives some good advice regarding this when she retells the story of Abraham Heschel writing about a pious man who was walking around his vineyard on a sabbath. He saw a broken fence and thought he would come back the next day to fix it. Because he thought of that act on the sabbath he thought to himself that was wrong and that he

²⁰ Baab, *Sabbath Keeping*, 56.

²¹ Baab, *Sabbath Keeping*, 56-57.

shall now never repair it. His reasoning came from interpreting the ancient sabbath commandment: “Rest even from the thought of labor.”²² This is nearly an impossible task but she argues: “We can refrain from activities that we know will summon worry, activities like paying bills, doing tax returns, and making lists of things to do in the coming week...we can cultivate those forms of engagement with nature, ideas, and other people that really get our minds off of the week ahead.”²³

Making Time for Rest

Sabbath rest is not just another day off. It goes much deeper than just sitting down and doing nothing or zooming all around doing this errand and that or even taking a much-needed afternoon nap. There is the need time to create space for sabbath. Alan Falding writes: “Returning to Hebrews 4:7, we’re reminded through David that the Lord set a certain day – calling it ‘Today’, God again set a certain day, calling it, ‘Today’ – for his people to hear his voice with receptive, responsive hearts.”²⁴ Falding goes on to dissect a common problem that faces many individuals. Our focus can easily settle on tomorrow as the day of rest and easily ignore making the most of the todays that come to us as sabbath. He continues,

Unfortunately, when it comes to rest, we tend to turn “today” into “someday.” Someday, I’ll live a more restful life. When I get out of college and start my career...When I get married and start a family...when I get established in my life and job...When I retire... When I die? When will we “enter his rest”? We default to that out of reach “Someday” whenever we offer up our ‘not yet’ excuses. Sometimes it’s a seasonal not

²² Dorothy C. Bass, *Receiving the Day: Christian Practices for Opening the Gift of Time* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2000), 65.

²³ Bass, *Receiving the Day*, 65.

²⁴ Alan Falding, *An Unhurried Life: Following Jesus’ Rhythms of Work and Rest* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 122.

“yet”: “I just can’t afford the time right now”; or an emotional
“not yet”: No one else is doing it!²⁵

The illusive tomorrow is here in the present, and it pays off dividends to pay attention to stop, rest and reflect. For in doing so, one is easily recharged and re-energized for future work that lies ahead. The questions Falding raises here makes me question where am I in my own journey: have I been able to truly take the time to rest or do I think I will magically catch up someday and really practice sabbath? If I am not making the sincere effort to enter into this gift of rest the Father wishes to give to me, then when will I do it?

Wayne Muller uses a phrase related to this matter that I have never considered. He believes that submitting to sabbath rest is all about surrendering to the gift that God has given to creation concerning sabbath and embracing it: “Sabbath requires surrender. If we only stop when we are finished with all our work, we will never stop – because our work is never completely done...If we refuse rest until we are finished, we will never rest until we die. Sabbath dissolves the artificial urgency of our days, because it liberates us from the need to be finished.”²⁶

For the longest time in my life I have had a “thing” for calendars. In my line of work I have to plan my day down to the detail and certainly give thought to the future. I became aware of my one my most significant problems in planning was to overlook what was going on in the present moment in my life. I was so planned out that my schedule overwhelmed me from what was right on my plate at the moment. My work is never

²⁵ Falding, *An Unhurried Life*, 122.

²⁶ Wayne Muller, *Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal, and Delight in Our Busy Lives*, bantam trade pbk. ed. (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 2000), 82-83.

done. If I am not careful I will never be in the right frame of mind to switch my brain full of activity off. The work of a minister is demanding, challenging and overwhelming dealing with a plethora of individual issues.

Muller's comment about how sabbath can "dissolves the artificial urgency of our days" cuts me to the quick. This is often my problem. I think my work is so important that I will even neglect the habit of embracing "today" while it is still with me. Alan Fadling reminds us that "Our allegiance is first to God, not to our to-do list or appointment calendar."²⁷

Dawn once again gives a bit of insight to this matter when she writes: "One of the reasons we keep the sabbath is that we can learn again to rest as God instructed. But one of the results of learning to rest is our identity as his holy people is a desire to be very careful about how we do what we do in order to reflect God's grace to others and to deepen our relationship with him."²⁸

A Gift for the Taking

The sabbath day is a gift. It is to be received. It is never forced upon one. "The Christian practice of keeping sabbath is also the gift of God. It offers welcome, not condemnation, losing its power if it is imposed on the unwilling or grasped self-righteously by those whose circumstances make it easy for them to keep sabbath."²⁹

So often when the term of sabbath comes up in the discussions with others it tends to move towards a legalistic bent and understanding of how it is to be practiced. That often tips the scales for debate or even guilt within some as self-reflection hits one in the

²⁷ Fadling, *An Unhurried Life*, 122.

²⁸ Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly*, 110.

²⁹ Bass, *Receiving the Day*, 77.

realization that sabbath is nowhere on one's radar. I really like what Bass says about the self-righteous attitude that can creep into the comments of ones who perhaps have an easier go at making sabbath a habit due to the fact that their real live schedules, work, and family issues are crafted in a way that makes it more of a habit. This can actually lead to a form of spiritual arrogance. When I view this as a gift, this frees me to embrace the day, set my heart to focus on what is essential and what it is God wants to give to me in these moments.

Abraham Heschel simply reminds us that "the sabbath is a day for the sake of life. Man is not a beast of burden, and the sabbath is not for the purpose of enhancing the efficiency of his work. 'Last in creation, first in intention,' the sabbath is 'the end of the creation of heaven and earth.'"³⁰ We are reminded here by Rabbi Heschel's comment that humans are not machines or robots or animals. Without proper rest we will break down and may be out of commission for some time. The gift of rest comes to us in a way that is not imposing or demanding.

We would do well to remember that the law of the sabbath was never intended to be a legalistic mandate but something that would restore joy to our souls. Mark Buchanan writes:

We resist that which six days of coming and going, pushing and pulling, dodging and weaving, fighting and defending have bred into us. What we deny ourselves is all our well-trained impulses to get and to spend and to make and to master. This day, we go in a direction we're unaccustomed to, unfamiliar with, that the other six days have made to seem unnatural to

³⁰ Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man* (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005), 14.

us. We do this, traveling in the opposite direction, maybe for no higher reason at first than that God told us to do it.³¹

The gift of sabbath is designed to intentionally take us in a different direction than we normally would go. It gives wind to our sails and drives us on our way. Buchanan continues here with the idea that joy is restored by all of this: “But joy is found here. The time you spend playing soccer with your children, or antique shopping with your spouse, that you otherwise might have spent writing memos for Monday morning or scrubbing walls for your in-laws visit next week – that time turns out to be a blessing as much for you, maybe more than for them.”³²

Sabbath isn’t just a day on the weekly calendar; it’s a way of living at least one day a week where the focus turns inward and upward. We find ourselves keeping a different pace and sharper focus on what is essential in life. Falling into the trap of defining what day of the week constitutes the “real sabbath” totally misses the intent of what the day is about. Baab taps into what this day is supposed to be all about: an intentional embrace of the rhythm of God.

The sabbath is about rhythm, intentionality and expectation. We embrace a rhythm God designed, intentionally setting aside our work for a day, so we can rest in the God who created and sustains the universe. We expect that this commitment to God’s rhythm will teach us things about him, and we expect that we will experience his goodness in a way that transcends words. Spontaneous sabbaths are better than no rest at all, but the biggest gifts of sabbath come over time through a consistent pattern of six days of work and one day of rest.³³

³¹ Mark Buchanan, *The Rest of God: Restoring Your Soul by Restoring Sabbath* (Nashville, TN: W Pub. Group, 2006), 115.

³² Mark Buchanan, *The Rest of God*, 115.

³³ Baab, *Sabbath Keeping*, 102.

Sundays are typically the busiest day of the week of the average minister. My years in the pastoral setting found me often leading numerous worship services, preaching, leading church board meetings and being everything from a taxi driver, cook and chief bottle washer, all on a Sunday. When I served on the island of Maui, it was the first time in my life that I truly began to understand what sabbath was. Mondays were my regular “day off” as was the custom of all the churches on the island to set that day apart of their ministers to rest and recharge. The pace was completely different than the rest of my week. Life was different back then as my wife and I didn’t have children, and I wasn’t struggling with addictions to technology. It was sleeping in, resting, reading, reflecting and a great effort of “hanging loose”. I learned to take the day as it came to me. Saturdays have been considered for the most part my sabbath in my current appointment in an academic setting for the past nine years. My routine followed a regimented schedule based around teaching and administrative duties during the week. It’s not easy to be as spontaneous with my time as it has been in other appointments I have had in my work with The Salvation Army, but I try to be very protective of my sabbath time to rest and find simple things to embrace the day with.

Celebration

Sabbath allows us for a time for joy and celebration. We take the time to be reminded of the consistency of God’s character and His faithfulness in our lives. Even in the dark moments of individual and corporate suffering when we practice sabbath we are able focus on the truth of the matter that God is consistent in both His love and discipline in our lives. Dawn says, “It’s not like our birthdays, which we celebrate because they happen only once a year. Rather, we celebrate every seven days because God’s grace

happens always.”³⁴ Within time and space as God has created, He continues to choose to love His creatures and creation. His love and grace never gives up on any of us. That thought alone should stop us in our tracks to give thanks and find joy.

Dan Allender calls sabbath our “play day.” He writes, “The sabbath is our play day – not as a break from the routine of work, but as a feast that celebrates the superabundance of God’s creative love to give glory for no other reason other than Love himself love to create and give away glory.”³⁵ We intentional pick a time to stop and celebrate all that has been given to us. God created and He found that was good. He intended for His creation to stop and rest and to find great joy and satisfaction in the labors that have been done and restoration for the work that lies ahead. Marva Dawn candidly points out: “Our society has forgotten how to celebrate. It has associated celebration with dissipation. It has turned the festival of the birth of Christ into a gluttonous spending spree and the festival of the resurrection of Christ into a spring egg roll and candy hunt.”³⁶ The confusion exists with any many in the church today. Celebration can swiftly turn into the accumulation of things, the need to be doing instead of being and neglecting to notice God in the simple things of life and in the silence. Dawn goes on to warn her readers: “These occasions now nurture in children not a sense of the holy God, but a selfish desire to possess. Such acquisitiveness can never lead to true celebration, for the latter is inherently turned outward.”³⁷

The celebratory act is not one that is selfish in nature. We are not to go into some sort of cave and forget the world in need around us. Again I find myself falling back

³⁴ Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly*, 197.

³⁵ Dan B. Allender and Phyllis Tickle, *Sabbath* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2009), 82.

³⁶ Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly*, 196.

³⁷ Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly*, 196.

appealing to the wisdom of Dawn as she is able to zero in on what the bottom line effect that sabbath can have in our lives and in the world at large when she writes:

...our sabbath feasting challenges us to become more involved in providing food for the hungry and economic possibilities for the oppressed. Our experience of the peace of God's presence in our sabbath worship and our listening to Scripture texts that proclaim God's purposes of peace motivate us to become more active in working for peace in the world – serving as agents of reconciliation in our offices and neighborhoods...Our celebration of the sabbath festival gives us hope and strength and power for dealing with all the work and events of the week to come in worshipful ways. Most of all, sabbath celebration gives us a deep sense of the Joy that is our because of the resurrection of Christ, and that festival of Joy equips us to glorify God in whatever tasks we might undertake in the following six days.³⁸

There are two terms she uses surrounding sabbath that I have not given much thought to in my journey: feasting and festival. The sabbath meal or partaking of substance of whatever sort reminds us of the provisions we have been given, thus we are to freely share. The term festival conjures up in my mind this idea of how sabbath should be a “holy carnival” of sorts. My ceasing and resting should help me obtain and hold on to joy. Joy is that sense of deep contentment that I can get nowhere else in life but in the holy pretenses of God.

Embracing

The final term regarding the rhythm of sabbath that I will explore here is that of embracing. Perhaps this can be considered the most important term as this has a way of cementing all the other definitions together. Often times the overall values of sabbath are seen in a negative light by some. The idea of stopping doesn't have much curb appeal to a culture that is always in full motion. Using the term of embracing places a more positive

³⁸ Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly*, 196.

emphasis on the day of sabbath. Moving from the temptation of legalism to a list of can't do's makes it an uphill battle to comprehend or even contemplate engagement in sabbath for some. Stopping from doing in a twenty-four/seven world is a foreign and avoidable concept for many. Our failure to cease may cause our anxiety level to rise, our blood pressure to go up and our over- all physical, spiritual and mental well begin to suffer. When we move towards embracing the instructions that God has given us related to sabbath, things change for us on several levels. There is an actual freeing of the soul.

So what is it we are embracing? Sabbath calls us to cease and desist in a healthy way. We are asked to let go of the known and take hold of the mystery of God. The ordinary ritual of work ceases, and we enter into a time of rest, reflection and celebration of our lives. We are reminded in our embracing that God is truly the One that sustains us and takes care of all that we need. He is the creator, preserver and governor of all things. He is the one who has redeemed us from our sins that have separated us from Him. We celebrate the grace we have received with great joy. This time apart in sabbath allows for focus on what is truly essential in my life and allows me to clasp it.

Dawn has written the most comprehensive portion in the reading on this particular subject of embracing. In her classic book on sabbath, she devotes an entire chapter to the concept of embracing the instructions of God on this matter. In her introductory comments on this subject she writes, "... these elements of God's kingdom and his purposes move us beyond the repentance of ceasing and the faith of resting into the application of the Christian lifestyle. By embracing God's instructions in response to his immense grace and love, we choose to imitate God."³⁹ The key idea here is that in my

³⁹ Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly*, 101.

embracing, I am choosing the pathway of imitation of God in my life. I do not just glibly pick and choose what aspects and elements that the life of discipleship has to offer. The command is to cease and rest. It pays dividends in my life to heed such a call.

There is a sense of urgency that needs to be taken to heart in embracing. The bigger picture is that sabbath is very foundational in our spiritual formation. It is a rhythm that must be paid attention to. Tilden Edwards reminds us of this simple truth: “A rhythm of sabbath and ministry time is foundational discipline, a framework for all our disciplines. It is a rhythm that God provides to human life for its care, cleansing and opening to grace. This rhythm is not for one day or one week or one year only. It is for our life.”⁴⁰ Again, this is something that God provides for us. He has our best interest at heart. I like the ideas Edwards shares here reminding me that this is a principle that should be fundamental in my life. This is a holy pace God wants for me to keep. For in keeping this, I will grow more attuned to his grace and receive the soul cleansing I need.

Entering into and embracing sabbath is not a once in a lifetime sort of thing.

Edwards goes on to clarify this:

Broken human beings cannot expect God’s wise love to hold in our awareness once and for all. The rhythm, as a permanent discipline, symbolizes this reality. We can pray that over the years it will help Holy Love to touch those cramped places of dammed up spiritual energy in our lives and release us for ever deeper, wiser, more steady and bold praise and ministry.⁴¹

The benefits of making this intentional in my life go way beyond my own personal benefit. This flows into the streams of others that come along my path to

⁴⁰ Tilden Edwards, *Sabbath Time: Understanding and Practice for Contemporary Christians* (New York, NY: Seabury Press, 1982), 124-125.

⁴¹ Edwards, *Sabbath Time*, 125.

minister to. Energy is renewed. Spiritual stamina is strengthened. The knowledge of “Holy Love” becomes engaged in my day-to-day realities.

Embracing kingdom values is the outcome measure of sabbath. When my wife and I were running residential summer camping programs, we would remind that staff that the summer was not about them. It’s about the children that would be coming. We strongly desired that each child to have the time of their lives and to be presented with the saving news of the gospel of Christ. We live in a world that floats the mantra, “It’s all about me.” Our sense of entitlement is pushed aside when we pursue kingdom values in our lives. Dawn gives an excellent outline of Acts 2:42-47 that can help lock in what these values may look like when fleshed out. Some of her thoughts in a nutshell are as follows: devoted to our relationship as a community; living our lives guided by the word of God; sharing deeply each other’s needs and carrying each other’s burdens; gathering for feasting and celebration – making this habitual; praying earnestly for each other; sharing with those in need amongst us; gathering to worship together on a consistent basis; and experiencing the presence of God amongst us in the form of signs and wonders.⁴² The value of ceasing allows me to embrace my need for community and how much the community needs me. I can gain so much from sincere fellowship and at the same time knowing that I have much to share with others that will benefit them along the way.

The scripture highlighted here reminds me that my embracing of sabbath is not solitary in nature. The broader picture is that when I gather in the context of community on the sabbath, there is a greater contribution that is to occur.

⁴² Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly*, 116.

In most congregations it is painfully true that the members gather only for worship and then quickly disperse to their own tasks and pleasures. One of the special meanings of sabbath keeping for me has been the notion that the Christian community *gathers* on that day. If our sabbath days become set aside for spiritual purposes and set apart from work and productivity, we can afford to spend more time together with our fellow believers so that we can be more thoroughly strengthened in the values of the community.⁴³

A good use of time in my embrace of the sabbath is to spend it with others in community.

Another significant thought to consider in regards to embracing sabbath are an understanding of time and space. Dawn challenges her readers to focus on embracing time rather than space:

...when we take the day to assess our use of time, we learn what is important in all those changes and how to prioritize our tasks and desires, so that we aren't overcome by the tyranny of the urgent. We must develop an objective perspective (rather than thinking we are 'out of time') to assess the quality of our days. This perspective has many aspects, but one of the foremost is the deliberate decision to focus on events in time with persons rather than using time to acquire or accomplish things.⁴⁴

This comment here forces me to think about my own use of time. What are my priorities? How am I just killing off time so I can get to the space needed my life? What things am I missing along the way?

Quality versus quantity of time is at play here in our own immortality. Dorothy Bass writes:

What is the measure of my days, weeks, and years, those I have had so far and those that remain? All of us wonder, naturally, about the quantity of

⁴³ Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly*, 117.

⁴⁴ Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly*, 119.

this measure. More important, however, is its quality. Are we living lives that are good...Lives that contribute to the well-being of other people...and to our own well-being? Lives attuned to the good of creation and to the active presence of God?⁴⁵

Losing my focus on the use of my time can throw me for a loop. Bass continues: “When our lives are perpetually out of sync, when time is more problem than gift, we are necessarily unsatisfied with our answers to these questions...A life that is not well lived in time can be the source of immense grief. To squander one’s lifetime is tragic.”⁴⁶ One thought here that intrigues me is the idea that time can eventually be a problem for me. There is either not enough or too much of it. When I think there is not enough time, it pushes me to the brink of chaos and irritability. Where there is too much time on my hands, I can find myself becoming more lethargic and apathetic in my approach to the moment. Dawn gives a good summation here to the thought of using time and space: “...when we experience being enveloped by sabbath time, we become people who are not enslaved to time. As we embrace time, then, we squander less and less of it for the things of space. We get in touch with eternity and bring eternal values into all the days of our week.”⁴⁷

Heschel uses a unique metaphor in relation to the sabbath and time: “The seventh day is a palace of time which we build. It is made of soul, of joy and reticence. In its atmosphere, a discipline is a reminder of adjacency to eternity.”⁴⁸ What a beautiful visual Heschel crafts here in regards to time as this palace we are in the midst of building on the sabbath. This gives me a different line of thinking as I delve into my ceasing and to what

⁴⁵ Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly*, 119.

⁴⁶ Bass, *Receiving the Day*, 116-117.

⁴⁷ Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly*, 123.

⁴⁸ Heschel, *The Sabbath*, 15.

it is I am exactly embracing. What I am building with my life in this rest period is not some shabby side road shack. This palace of my soul is to be a place of grandeur and wonder. I can explore the mystery of God as I take on a different pace in the exploration of my soul and as I engage in embracing this unique gift of time and space that God has given to me.

I agree with Dawn who makes a key thought with which to clinch the topic of sabbath. She feels that the term “embracing” is better to use than the word “choosing.” It is a term that helps me grab with greater intensity as she believes, places more of a focus on the “positive aspects of keeping sabbath”⁴⁹ The outcome of the embrace for me is a rejuvenation to my mission in ministry. Dawn concludes:

We can embrace our calling to share God’s love with the exhilaration of knowing that God has uniquely equipped each of us for our particular roles and that he will provide all that we need for the ministry to which he has called us. Immersing ourselves in his love on the sabbath overwhelms us with his grace, clarifies our perceptions of our role, and empowers us for the tasks he makes clear.⁵⁰

Summation

There is good reason why sabbath rest was given to humankind as a commandment. A holy God has set up the boundaries in which to live our lives. There is a sanctified rhythm in which we are to roam and embrace freely in our lives. This is to be a holy day that will lead us on to more holy living in the six days ahead if we allow it. Jesus reminded his followers when he said: “The sabbath was made for man, not man for

⁴⁹ Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly*, 135.

⁵⁰ Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly*, 136.

the sabbath.”⁵¹ We were created to enter into this rest, and this day apart is a gentle reminder about what that respite can do within our lives.

Dan Allender gives some balanced advice:

Many who take the sabbath seriously and intentionally ruin it with legislation and worrisome fences that protect the sabbath but destroy its delight. For many sabbath keepers, it is a day of duty, diligence, and spiritual focus that eschews play and pleasure for Bible reading, prayer, naps and tedious religious services that seem designed to suck the air out of the soul. If that is keeping the sabbath holy, then it’s better to break it.⁵²

The joy must not be taken away. One of the major lessons that I have learned in my study on sabbath is that delighting in the day is centric to all that may occur in the week to come. The joy of these moments will sustain me through the tussles and trials that await.

For such a long time in my life I have viewed the sabbath as one particular day. Growing up as a child in a Roman Catholic home we kept the sabbath in a rather subdued fashion. Going to church early and then keeping the activity at a minimum was the family standard. As I got myself involved in full time ministry, I found that the sabbath was actually a very busy day and that it wasn’t particularly a day of delight. It was not a day of ceasing, resting, and celebrating and certainly not a day I wanted to embrace. It was a workday, my busiest day.

When I entered into this thesis project I was immediately convicted by the topic of sabbath. I came to a realization of my great personal neglect and failure to engage in sabbath on a consistent basis. I either ignored it or just thought a day off was just as good

⁵¹ Mark 2:27.

⁵² Allender and Tickle, *Sabbath*, 8.

as a sabbath day. I can honestly say that through my study, reading and research I was terribly wrong to have not made this more of a part of my life.

The intent of my overall exploration of this thesis was not to offer criticism to my colleagues that work very hard serving suffering humanity, to blame The Salvation Army for its lack of using the verbiage of sabbath or to extend the long guilt trip I may put myself on for my lack of practice of this day. The term sabbath has brought up confusion, condemnation and chaos at times for some people I have met or ministered to. I feel that I have only started to truly understand this topic. The authors that I have engaged with here have helped me understand the essence of what sabbath is all about. It is a day of delight where I can learn to cease and desist. I can rest from my labors and striving. I can celebrate the goodness of God in my life. And, I can embrace all the day has for me. These are the rhythms of God that I know I will only grow to appreciate more in my own spiritual journey. Keeping in mind always that sabbath rest is not to be an option, it's simply a commandment. One that should be heeded and implemented in some fashion as the spiritual expedition continues.

Where is this Heading?

At the conclusion of the literature review on the topic of sabbath the next natural step to take is directly into the thesis project itself. Chapter four is a compilation of survey data that was taken from the active officer force of The Salvation Army in the Western Territory. The topic for the thesis project is entitled "The Sabbath & the Salvationist." The actual survey was administrated for three weeks in September 2014. Over five hundred responses were returned with plenty of diverse data and comments

abstracted from the actual survey. The next chapter will document the results of this survey.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH PROJECT

Introduction

The following is a project report on the survey findings on my thesis entitled “The Sabbath & the Salvationist.” This survey was conducted to explore the problem that faces the individual Salvation Army officer in regards to sabbath knowledge and the lack of its application to one’s personal life. The individuals who were targeted to answer the following questions of this survey come from the Western Territory of The Salvation Army and in particular, the active officer force.¹

The Western Territory of The Salvation Army serves communities in the following areas: Alaska, Washington, Oregon, California, Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, Idaho, Montana, Colorado, Wyoming, Hawaii, Guam, Micronesia and the Marshall Islands. The officers who serve in this vast geographical region do so in a variety of different appointments. Corps (church), College for Officer Training, ARC (Adult Rehabilitation Centers), divisional and territorial headquarters (regional administrative offices), social services, Red Shield & Kroc Centers (arts, education & recreation centers). The survey was designed to help the officers keep their particular appointments and geographical locations in mind when answering the questions found here.

An email was generated and sent through The Salvation Army’s Lotus Notes system in early September 2014 to all the active officers of the Western Territory. At the

¹ The topic of this survey quickly grew the interest of officer, soldier, employee and friend alike. I decided to allow those who inquired to participate in the survey using the link via the Facebook group page. This helped a sense of belonging to those who were sincerely interested in this unique event in a way. The results were minor and did not alter the final outcomes one way or another.

time when the email was sent, there were 750 officers serving in a wide range of appointments. The window for response was three weeks with a follow up reminder scheduled half way through the scheduled time.²

My overall optimistic goal was to get anywhere between 150 to 200 responses. The response was, to say the least, overwhelming. Within the first twenty-four hours I had over 200 responses. In total 590 individuals responded to this survey within the three-week period. The subject of sabbath rest had perked the interest of friends and associates who are not officers. Several of them contacted me to see if there was a way that they could participate in the survey. I created a link via a Facebook group page so that individuals who were interested in participating in the survey could join in. There were a small percentage of non-officers who part took in the survey via social media.³

The purpose of the survey was to determine if the topic of sabbath is in the heart and mind of an active Salvation Army officer. Is there a clear definition of sabbath? What sorts of challenges lie in the way in making sabbath a habit in the life of an officer? Are there institutional challenges that get in the way from preventing an officer to embrace sabbath? The questions were aligned to collect and measure demographic information; find an understanding for the definition of sabbath in the life of a Salvation Army officer and to give an opportunity for the participant to leave comments. The following represents the findings of this effort.

² See appendix for the letter that was sent to all active officers.

³ A hyper link to the survey was put in the Facebook page entitled "The Sabbath & the Salvationist." 12 percent of those who took the survey did so through this link.

Demographics

Question One: What is your gender?

Answered: 574

Skipped: 16

Female: 294 (51.22%)

Male: 280 (48.78%)

Note: In the first portion of the survey questions were asked to access the demographical make up of those who were responders. The gender response was pretty evenly split. The survey link was sent to officers in general and not to specific genders. There was no opportunity granted in the survey for specific or related written comments to be recorded by the responders.

Question Two: What is your ethnicity?

Answered: 582

Skipped: 8

White: 428 (73.54 %)

Hispanic: 31 (5.33%)

Black or African American: 15 (2.58%)

American Indian or Alaskan Native: 4 (0.69%)

Asian: 35 (6.01%)

Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander: 17 (2.92%)

From multiple races: 33 (5.67%)

Rather not say: 19 (3.26%)

Note: Even though there is a great sense of diversity in the overall ethnic make-up of soldiers and officers in the Western Territory, the large majority of responders were white. The survey was only sent in the English language to active officers. English is the language for all official correspondence in the Western Territory. Because of this fact, there was no consideration given to present this in a different language. There was no opportunity granted in this survey question for specific or related written comments to be recorded by the responders.

Question Three: What is your role in Salvation Army ministry?

Answered: 568

Skipped: 22

Active officer: 495 (87.15%)

Retired officer: 15 (2.64%)

Soldier: 60 (10.56%)

Employee: 24 (4.23%)

Volunteer: 17 (2.99%)

Note: As mentioned previously, the bulk of the responders to the survey are active Salvation Army officers of the Western Territory. This statistical breakdown shows the

percentages of the various groupings that responded. There was no opportunity granted in this survey question for specific or related written comments to be recorded by the responders.

Question Four: How many active years have you given in your ministry role?

Answered: 570

Skipped: 20

0-5 years: 154 (27.02%)

5-10 years: 56 (9.82%)

10-15 years: 70 (12.28%)

15-20 years: 72 (12.63%)

20-25 years: 76 (13.33%)

25-30 years: 45 (7.89%)

30-35 years: 38 (6.67%)

35-40 years: 32 (.61%)

40-45 years: 17 (2.98%)

Note: The highest percentage of participants that answered is new officers who have given active service between zero to five years. There was no opportunity granted in this survey question for specific or related written comments to be recorded by the responders.

Question Five: What is your current appointment?

Answered: 531

Skipped: 59

Corps: 384 (68.55%)

Overseas Appointment: 3 (0.56%)

Social Service/Institution: 5 (0.94%)

Kroc Center/Red Shield Center: 13 (2.45%)

ARC (Adult Rehabilitation Center): 26 (4.90%)

CFOT (College for Officer Training): 27 (5.08%)

DHQ (Divisional Headquarters): 70 (13.18%)

THQ (Territorial Headquarters): 34 (6.40%)

Note: The appointment pairings here represent the general ministry categories in which officers of the Western Territory are placed. The term “corps” represents the local church community. Social service and or institutions offer holistic services and Kroc Center and Red Shield Centers offer a wide range of arts, recreation, education and spiritual formation activities. ARC are the drug and alcohol treatment centers. CFOT is the college for training officers (one in the Western Territory). DHQ & THQ (regional denominational headquarters) are administrative appointments in nature giving governance to the policies and procedures of The Salvation Army. There was no opportunity granted in this survey question for specific or related written comments to be recorded by the responders.

Question Six: What command are you assigned to in the US Western Territory?

Answered: 531

Skipped: 59

ARC: 22 (3.95%)

CFOT: 23 (4.13%)

Alaska: 36 (6.46%)

Cascade: 40 (7.18%)

Del Oro: 58 (10.41%)

Hawaiian & Pacific Islands: 17 (3.05%)

Intermountain: 35 (6.28%)

Golden State: 43 (7.72%)

Northwest: 58 (10.41%)

Sierra Del Mar: 39 (7.00%)

Southern California: 45 (8.08%)

Southwest: 66 (11.85%)

Not Applicable: 90 (16.16%)

Note: Within the Western Territory is a command structure. There are ten divisions, plus the ARC (Adult Rehabilitation Center command) and CFOT (College for Officer Training). These commands are governed under the policies and procedures of The Salvation Army in the Western Territory, a California Corporation. Territorial headquarters is overseen by International Headquarters in London, England. Within each

command exists a wide range of ministry opportunities that officers are appointed to covering a vast geographical area as previously mentioned. Ninety participants of the survey did not choose to associate themselves with any of these commands either by choice or did not qualify as not being assigned to a command. There was no opportunity granted in this survey question for specific or related written comments to be recorded by the responders.

Question Seven: How do you define sabbath?

Total responses: 513

Skipped: 77

Notes: This question generated seventeen pages of comments with 513 responses. This question was posed in a manner that would allow the responder to give a subjective response. The curious thing here is how many individual chose to not answer this question. 13 percent that were surveyed skipped this question.

There was a common theme that ran through the responses to this question. The term “rest” came up in many instances in how to describe sabbath. Here is an example of such responses:

Responder #27 - “A time set aside for rest in the Lord. It is a time of personal rest and spiritual revitalization.”

Responder #88 – “A day of rest.”

Responder #62 – “Rest in the Lord. Time of reflection of what you’ve done and what you’ll do.”

Responder #137 – “A day of rest not only to actually rest, but to find time to worship God.”

Responder #232 – “A day of rest in the Lord, a day with no concentration on anything else but relaxing, reading the Bible, and going somewhere other than the office.”

Some chose to answer this question by giving their definitions of how sabbath is to be encountered. Here is an example of such responses:

Responder #270 – “Finding rest from work for one entire day. This means two half days does not count as sabbath. Also, if you find rest in knitting, hiking, gardening, etc. that counts too. It’s not about doing nothing; it is about doing whatever makes you feel rested. Exceptions are if you do something that physically drains your body; the point is to charge your batteries for another week. This is your time with God in worship, whatever form that might take.”

Responder #293 – “A time given by God to rest and recuperate and spend time in quiet activities with family and friends and to focus on God’s blessings and God’s gifts as well as His creation being enjoyed. A day that is used to spend time with persons including spouse and children particularly when there has not been quiet time with them over the week prior to Sunday sabbath as the Lord’s Day along with corps worship service and Sunday school, etc.”

Responder # 324 – “A sacred time for me to come before God. Not usually Sunday but it can happen then I usually try and take a day apart to have a real sabbath. Even then there are things that have to be done. Absolute definition rest with God.”

Responder #394 – “Sabbath is a time where there are no demands on a person so they can just relax and get some downtime. I have to really make a special effort to take this time to rejuvenate my spirit.”

Responder # 492 – “Sabbath is one day in seven, to put aside the regular work and ministry routine to devote to physical and mental rest and to renew spiritually.”

One person that responded to this question who was completely honest about their struggle to understand what a definition of it would look like in their own life:

Responder #10 – “A clear definition of sabbath is difficult for me to figure out. I usually end up too black and white about it and box myself into a corner.”

Note: Another commented how their understanding of sabbath is growing:

Responder #230 – “For many years I only thought of sabbath as the one day we worship the Lord in a church setting. For the past few years I have come to understand that sabbath or sabbath rest can be any day and not necessarily in community.”

Note: Overall there were many similarities in the responses: the focus on rest and drawing nearer to God in the process. Many felt that the benefits of sabbath were essential to maintain their spiritual well-being.

Question Eight: “What is the best term that defines your understanding of sabbath?”

Rank your selection from one to four.

Answered: 512

Skipped: 77

Ranking of the terms

Number one:

Resting: 58.12% - 297 responders

Ceasing: 21.96% - 112 responders

Embracing: 11.18% - 57 responders

Celebrating: 9.00% - 46 responders

Ranking two:

Ceasing: 34.51% – 176 responders

Resting: 22.11% - 113 responders

Embracing: 21.96% - 112 responders

Celebrating: 21.53% - 110 responders

Ranking Three:

Embracing: 37.65% - 192 responders

Celebrating: 34.44% - 176 responders

Ceasing: 16.27% - 83 responders

Resting: 11.74% - 60 responders

Ranking Four:

Celebrating: 35.03% - 179 responders

Embracing: 29.22% - 149 responders

Ceasing: 27.25% - 139 responders

Resting: 8.02 % - 41 responders

Note: This particular question dealt with the four aspects of the definition of sabbath that I have explored in the literature review. Those terms were resting, ceasing,

celebration and embracing. The predominant definition at this point is the term rest. The simple reason for this ranking is to see how these terms fall in line with how the survey takers think about sabbath. Resting is the term most sees as the best definition of sabbath. There was no opportunity granted in this survey question for specific or related written comments to be recorded by the responders.

Question Nine: What are other terms you would use to describe sabbath?

Answered: 452 (76.6%)

Skipped: 138 (23.3%)

Note: The comment feedback on this question came to 13 pages. The following are some of the words that were suggestions, but not an exhaustive list, to describe sabbath: reflection; solitude; restoring; renewing; recharge; relax; recreation; refreshing; linger; solace; worship; reprieve; being; living; breathing; surrender; communion; stepping away; loving; holy; completion; contemplation; focusing; empowerment; escape; serenity; trusting; recuperation; fun; blessing; happy; nurture; habit; practicing the presence of God; real; disconnect; margin; healing; shalom; unplugged; separation. This question received some interesting comments as well and are represented here:

Responder #6: "rare, misunderstood."

Responder #8: "Deduction"

Responder #14: "Mandatory"

Responder #133: "Needed. More than just a Divine request. A gift. Beautiful."

Responder #235: “Former. Old fashioned.”

Responder #290: “That’s already more than I could come up with...”

Responder #341: “Elusive. Contemplative. Impossible.”

Responder #422: “I would also use the term rejuvenation. Sabbath makes space for me to recharge and reconnect, with my Father, my family, my spouse, and with my own rhythm of life.”

Responder#443: “Those were pretty good. I don’t know if I can top them.”

Note: There were also some comments that could be deemed as opinions or constructive assistance when it comes to understanding sabbath.

Responder #32: “People easily underestimate the value and purpose of sabbath, which God ordered.”

Responder #38: “A day to rest and embraced what we did and learn from whatever mistake we did. A day to celebrate with loved one all we did throughout the week and give thanks to the God who gives us strength and blessings.”

Responder #131: “Intentional. I have to put down the laptop, cell phone, ‘To Do’ list, etc. and make time with God the priority.”

Responder #190: “According to the Old Testament was giving to the Jewish to be set apart from all daily work. But Jesus gave us this words ‘the Son of Man is Lord of the sabbath’ I will dedicate that day for the Lord but if there is any emergency in that day I will respond to.”

Responder # 269: “Ignore all electronics”

Responder #349: “Relaxation, gaining insight. The SA term ‘soup, soap, salvation’ I think ring true for the sabbath as I understand it. You have to take care of the physical needs to reach the spiritual needs.”

Responder #359: “TAWG – Time alone with God.”

Question Ten: “Do you practice sabbath on a regular basis in your life?”

Answered: 514 (87.1%)

Skipped: 76 (12.8%)

Answered “Yes”: 323 (62.84%)

Answered “No”: 191 (37.1%)

Note: The purpose of this question was to get at the heart of the matter: is sabbath something that is practiced by the active officer. The high percentage who said no is alarming. Some of the following comments to the remaining questions give a little bit of insight as to why this may be the case. There was no opportunity granted in this survey question for specific or related written comments to be recorded by the responders.

Question Eleven: “If so, what are some of the ways that you practice sabbath in your life? Please give some examples.

Total responses: 411 (69.6%)

Skipped the question: 178 (30.3%)

Note: This question stirred up lots of different comments in regards to how sabbath is implemented in the lives of Salvationists. An interesting statistic here is to note how many of those surveyed chose to skip answering this question. (30.3%) There is no rationale given as to why this high percentage has occurred but it gives room for speculation. For those who did answer there were over sixteen pages of responses. The responses could be broken down into the categories of practical ideas; personal

philosophy, theological meanings about sabbath, personal confession and challenges in regards to how sabbath is either embraced or ignored.

Practical Ideas

Responder #7: "Solitude in the veggie garden. Or going for a drive with the family."

Responder #40: "Turning off phone...playing my worship music on and taking care of me and mine."

Responder #65: "Our sabbath is split in two. In the morning we celebrate and commune with God and our fellow Christians. In the afternoon, we rest and get refreshed to continue the ministry."

Responder #78: "Turning phone off, leaving laptop in the office, leaving phone at home, no work related time on phone/iPad, intentional time off with wife (meal/movie/beach/hangout)"

Responder #87: "Stepping away from 'daily' life. Quiet time with the Word. Noticing moments and taking mental images to ponder. Allowing myself to look around with a faith eye."

Responder #92: "Time spent on the beach, reading a book, Bible, prayer, napping, forgetting about all the many things I still have to do, enjoying my family, baking, napping."

Responder #124: "Tying up loose ends before sabbath-ing. Not working (not even laundry or dishes). Not chocking the day full of stuff. Not needing to do anything. Minimize distractions."

Responder #127: "...This also includes devotions (daily), Christian music, Christian programs on TV or video, inviting friends to join us for worship, meals, fellowship, etc. It also involves a time of rest, perhaps sleep or just reading and often time of prayer and unburdening to God."

Responder #171: "Seeking the Lord in prayer, worship and study. Gardening, taking a nap, reading a book or watching an edifying film. Taking a hike, playing a game, writing a poem, being still."

Responder #206: "Wake up with no alarm clock. Take time to do things I want to do; things that bring joy to my heart, like walking, reading, or sometimes just taking a drive. The key for me is 'no agenda' for that day."

Responder #243: "I prepare as much as possible the day before...gasoline purchase, food prep, clothing choices, ironing, etc. I go as few places as possible, and nothing 'frivolous'. I don't eat in restaurants and am not a consumer or customer in any way. I do no shopping at all. I gladly visit the sick and shut ins, but otherwise I stay home and am quiet."

Responder #296: "I have a sabbath morning date with my wife. She sleeps in and then we go to breakfast. Just a quiet relaxed morning. I love to read..."

Responder #406: "I stop everything. I don't check my email. I don't check my phone; I don't turn on the internet. I just stop doing and take time to sort of shut down and rest."

Personal Philosophies

Responder #64: "...I have tried many times but in the ministry there is always someone that is in need and I know that we have some kinda rule that we try to get the person to come back on Monday but sometimes that just isn't feasible and we will have to help out. Normally come to church and go home and rest for the rest of the day."

Responder #94: "The demands of officership makes it hard to observe a sabbath rest. We asked for a change of appointments as the demands of the previous appointment were having an affect on our health. In a new appointment we are seeking a more balanced approach to activities and rest, even if Sunday is still a busy day for us."

Responder #118: "We are getting much better at taking time, but we are in a big command with a youth center, feeding program, social services. I am the County Coordinator, my wife is the administrator of our office and we have two thrift stores and EDS responsibilities in the county we are in."

Responder #142: "If The Salvation Army does not schedule my Saturday I try to take it easy and limit my responsibilities to final sermon preparation (power point for Sunday) and maybe do some recreation. I try to release worries, cares and control to the Lord regularly...I still plan, prepare and do due diligence...taking my responsibilities seriously, but I try not to control and worry about the outcome...leaving that to God."

Responder #159: "Based on my two definitions: (1) The practice is to worship God, celebrate His name, and have corporate fellowship with believers. That is done on Sundays. (2) I take 1 day per week to stay away from all officer work and take time out for just me. I make no apologies for that day. It's all about ME. For example, I will watch a movie, engage in my hobby, learn something new, or prepare a new recipe. While it's all about ME, if the alarm goes off, or the building is on fire, I'll be the first to show up. Hmm."

Theological Understanding

Responder #132: "Sabbath is a lifestyle in which you are constantly living in the presence of God."

Responder #227: "Recognizing that God created sabbath for Man and to be quiet and relaxed and focus on God's blessings in our lives and fully appreciating them."

Confessions

Responder #257: "I don't really, never been taught how."

Responder #390: "I wish I had some."

Responder #263: "I try to, but find it difficult due to other commitments. My fault, I need to limit these sometimes to refresh."

Responder #284: "Coming to the end of myself and my struggling with impossible situations. Guilt free time away from busyness (any day will do). Saying 'yes' when God invites me to have some fun with His children."

Challenges

Responder # 342: "The life of a Salvation Army officer doesn't always lend itself to resting or practicing sabbath. The nature of the job at the DHQ level is many times seven days a week without a true day of rest. In order to get sabbath, I sometimes have to not go to church to get a day of rest and restoration. As Monday through Friday I am in the office. Saturday is the day I do personal errands, clean house, etc. and then Sunday I am required to visit corps. The question is what day is available for rest? So in order to rest, I must either not clean my house, buy groceries, go to work, etc. So periodically I have to make a conscious effort by not choosing to do something rather than by actually having a day not cluttered with activity."

Question 12: Do you use all your allotted vacation (furlough) time each year?

Answered: 510

Skipped: 80

Yes: 260 50.98%

No: 251 49.22%

Note: This question was answered in a near even split. A Salvation Army officer is allotted anywhere from three to five weeks furlough a year, depending upon years of service. The responses here are very typical problems that an officer faces: time off but not time to use it. The unique thing about furlough time for a Salvation Army officer is that it is not rolled over. It must be used within the calendar year. There was no opportunity granted in this survey question for specific or related written comments to be recorded by the responders.

Question 13: If you do not use all of your vacation time (furlough) each year, please reasons why you are not able to do so or choose not to.

Answered: 318

Skipped: 272

Note: The responders' here offered a variety of reasons why all furlough time was not used. This question generated 12 pages of responses. Some of the comments left were concerning the lack of use of vacation for various logistical reasons: scheduling

issues between camps, divisional events, children's calendars and program within the local ministry often times makes it difficult for an officer to get all their vacation time in. There is also the challenge of personal finances. The affordability for the average officer to take a long extended vacation is challenging. Although many divisions make extra quarters available at summer residential camps available to officers at little or no cost. There are creative and affordable options.

Another thing that seeps in here with the comments is some organizational attitudes. There were some strong feelings that some administrative officers (divisional commanders) dictate too closely when furlough time can be taken. There is a feeling that the window of opportunity for furlough is shortened because of this situation. All officers must have their furlough time approved ahead of time by their command head.

Logistic Issues

Responder 18: "Sometimes with Army functions, there is not enough time to do furlough. It was not made clear to us when we first became officers. We strive and sometimes with difficulty to use our furlough. Sometimes it costs way too much to buy plane tickets to see family."

Responder #27: "The business of the corps is too important to just go go go."

Responder #233: "Demands of the appointment do not always allow it. At THQ, I was able. At some corps appointments I was able but most corps appointments simply did not allow it."

Responder #30: "Time, money, other commitments, but mostly a personal decision that I do not have the time to be away."

Responder #61: "My current appointment does not allow me this luxury. A couple of my employees need more assistance than I would like, and we just have the leadership here at the corps. We are still training our staff, however we currently do not have the people/leaders in our corps to direct when we are gone."

Responder #238: "We find it hard to be away from the corps for personal time since we gone so much for Army events. I think we use only around 9 days a year."

Responder #94: "It is tough. When you have little to no leadership and everything stops due to no leadership you feel like there is no consistency. DHQ and THQ events within the corps, division and territorially can take up a lot of time away from your appointment.

Personal Philosophies

Responder #209: "I do not have time to take vacation..."

Responder #222: "Vacation is an abstract concept to someone joyfully engaged in a Call to Kingdom work. That is not to say that I sometimes need it, and need time away from the office to spend with family and friends...but not as an entitlement to fuss over if I don't manage to get all of it."

Responder #212: "Don't plan in advance. (I think this would help). Sometimes not a lot of money. Hard to coordinate kids, vacations, camp, and being able to leave for a week at a time, "staycations" end up being work at home so that's not really a break, even though we have the best intentions"

Responder #65: "I just don't make the time."

Responder #299: "Haven't been intentional about it."

Responder #241: "Don't want to put ministry aside."

Responder #268: "I feel like I need to be at or available to the corps at all times."

Responder #252: "There have been some years that I've allowed activities that I believe needs my presence to govern whether or not to take all my furlough weeks. However, as a 'veteran' officer, I've learned how important it is, physically and spiritually, to take all those weeks each year if I'm to effectively serve all of my years as an active officer before retirement."

Responder #289: "Never seems to be the right time to take it."

Responder #313: "Historically (looking back at all the career based jobs I've held) I rarely use vacation time. I suppose one of the main reasons would be that I am too attached to my job, and that I do not want to let others down if I am gone. I would also say that taking vacation (other than a staycation) can be expensive, and I always need something to do."

Organizational Attitudes

Responder #247: “DHQ for #1. You have to be at this or that, you can’t take furlough during this time or that time until it leaves you with NO time. But you can be sure they get theirs in when they want to. #2 – the appointment. To little leadership to help cover the things need covered and when you can’t cover it, DHQ wants to know WHY and if you don’t cover it they won’t approve the furlough request until it’s covered.”

Responder #49: “Difficulty getting furlough approved, difficulty finding time to take away

Responder #277: (part of a very long post) “... 3. Pressure from DC to be present and available...4. Regular speeches at Officers’ Council telling field officers we aren’t working hard enough, and aren’t out in the community often enough. 5. Surprise drop in visits from the DC. If you aren’t in the building, comments are made about you having been ‘out playing around or home napping’. 6. Comments made by the DC about officers who do take their full 4-5 weeks of vacation...’Must be nice to always get to be away’. For me, in a nutshell: some of the pressure to be always working is self imposed...But it also comes from the regular and consistent implication I am just not working hard enough.”

Question 14: What do you think are the values and benefits of sabbath keeping?

Answered 483

Skipped: 107

Note: This question offered up a lot of positive responses and the opportunity for responders to consider some self-reflection on the validity of taking sabbath. This question generated 17 pages of responses. The following is a sampling of comments left by the participants.

Responder #6: “It helps keep you from burnout and gives you a chance to increase your input (personal and spiritual development) so that your output (ministry and sharing Jesus with others) can be more effective.

Responder #10: “Health, clarity, sanity, revitalized purpose, good modeling for the congregation and extended family, a moment of ceasing.”

Responder #25: "I need the change of pace. I do not define myself so much as an officer. I am a person performing the role of an officer. As such, I need time for not performing that role for sanity, sustenance, and well-being."

Responder #56: "A holy day off is important. God refreshes us in silence. We can hear Him speak when we take time to listen. We can enjoy those around us better when we aren't being rushed/pushed around by schedules."

Responder #81: "Re-alignment with the plans and purposes of heaven. Re-commitment to God's will. Refreshment of the mind and spirit. Scheduled rest."

Responder #140: "To recharge, rejuvenate and refresh. To maintain balance and remain sane. To step away from the 'machinery' and to allow freedom to just be present. It speaks volumes to one's family and friends and areas of influence about their importance (by spending time with them you show them you care for them). It is God's command – when we obey we reap the benefits."

Responder #150: "Hey if God tells us to do it, He has good reasons. So I do not have to fully understand it to know it is important. I want to remain open to a deeper understanding."

Responder #164: "One of the greatest values is boundary-keeping. Sabbath keeping established better boundaries. Another value is being poured into by God. A benefit is that I feel more joy in my work, life and family when I am well rested. I also tend to do a better job when I am well rested."

Responder #197: "Sabbath keeping brings perspective into my life. I'm able to step back, step out, and return with a renewed spirit and passion for work (ministry).

Responder #213: "The Lord (who did not need to rest) modeled sabbath and set up (even commanded) intentional time for rest, renewal and celebration. He understood how we are designed, with an innate need for stopping, reflecting, rejoicing, and remembering for our physical, emotional and spiritual health."

Responder #334: "If we lose our joy and peace that come from the Lord then everything we do without it is tainted. We must fight for those gifts and the sabbath is one way of doing that."

Responder #358: "I think that if we were to practice a true sabbath, the benefits would touch every aspect of our lives. We would benefit emotionally, physically, and spiritually. We would be less stressed, we would be more fulfilled spiritually, and we would be rested and rejuvenated physically."

Responder #402: “Ministry is not something that I can do in my own strength. If I tried, I would fail. I believe God equips us to do His ministry with His strength, then what strength are we really using?”

Question 15: In your current ministry setting, what are some of the challenges that you face that may prevent you from taking a regular sabbath?

Answered: 471

Skipped: 119

Note: This question allowed the participant the opportunity to share an honest response. There were 18 pages of comments left by participants. Common phrases include the following: scheduling issues; ministry responsibilities; expectations; lack of help of local lay leadership or employees; too much to do; busy corps; and travel. Here is a sampling of what was shared:

Responder #5: “We have minimum staffing, we are continually tasked to raise finances, we are actively involved in our community, we provide oversight and coordination to several other corps in our area, the list goes on and on.”

Responder #11: “TSA/work needs and requirements. My wife and I are pretty good at keeping the sabbath but sometimes things just happen. During the months of November and December, sabbaths are almost non-existent.”

Responder #55: “Other people have an agenda for my life – work and the community.”

Responder #88: “We operate 24/7 facilities.”

Responder #100: “Faith is also my occupation and the lines become blurred.”

Responder #118: “Since the ‘army’ is such as program driven organization, it is very hard to justify a sabbath. We also serve a very needy people who are always demanding time.”

Responder #139: “There’s always more work. I’m always behind...”

Responder #149: “Living on the property.”

Responder #167: "Satan's gradualism."

Responder #185: "My ministry is my sabbath."

Responder #191: "...Feeling guilty if I'm resting while others work."

Responder #203: "Laziness in giving attention to it."

Responder #217: "This is a VERY small appointment. If my wife and I don't do it, it doesn't get done. Period."

Responder #277: "Workload. Too much work. Need to get too much done. Lots of work. Did I mention work?"

Responder #300: "As an assistant (officer) my schedule is not mine to dictate."

Responder #325: "The rigors of daily expectancy."

Responder #338: "Me. Face it, you do what you want."

Responder #410: "There is always the next task."

Responder #447: "No excuses. Just haven't been intentional about 'carving' out the time."

Question 16: If you have any additional comments to make on this subject, please feel free to do so here. Thank you so much for taking the time to share in this survey."

Answered: 210

Skipped: 380

Note: The following are a general listing of some of the responses that were given at the end of the survey. There were 11 pages of comments left by the participants. The comments left were very encouraging and helpful. There is a note of optimism that evades these comments.

Responder #4: "I have been in this appointment four years. Reviews consist of how well are the thrift stores doing? Not even how well is your program going? And never know are you doing? Can I pray with you? Are you taking time for yourself? Do you keep

sabbath? Until we have leaders that teach keeping sabbath and teach and show by example that maintaining our relationship with Christ is cheating ourselves and the world. We should not be content to maintain but desire to deepen it.”

Responder #6: “The Salvation Army is a ministry and ministry is busy. We are to be about OTHERS but many times we are worn out from taking care of OTHERS and we can’t give what we don’t have.”

Responder #17: “I think the nature of the Army and the personality of those attracted to the Army also adds another layer of why we fail at taking/observing a true sabbath. However, I also firmly believe that it is a ‘choice’ and we choose poorly!”

Responder #38: “Administration should reprimand officers who do not take vacations, time off or a sabbath. For if they don’t they are no good spiritually to themselves, family and congregation.”

Responder #43: “I broke my sabbath to answer this survey. (smile)”

Responder #45: “You are approaching this from the perspective the sabbath being a day. I don’t. Hebrews 3 and 4 make it pretty clear to me that Jesus fulfilled the sabbath, is the Lord of the sabbath, and living in him I fulfill the sabbath.”

Responder #58: “Help us solve the matter.”

Responder #60: “At the end of the day, we have to be responsible to make it happen. We have to be responsible for ourselves and the time we MAKE for sabbath. There’s never enough time and it will never happen naturally, nor do I think sabbath is easy. It must be fought for, and somehow, we must figure a way to not feel guilty about doing so. As ministry leaders, we need it.”

Responder #88: “Salvation Army officers have a long history of ignoring the commandment to observe the sabbath, and have been both directly and indirectly encouraged to do so. Because of our emphasis on service, we often create a culture the values doing over being, productivity over humility and obedience. The ‘sacrament of service’ sometimes becomes our sword of self-righteousness. We desperately need to address this issue with both our officers and soldier’s...”

Responder #104: “I would encourage everyone to take a sabbath and not just talk about it. The everyday life of an officer can get tiring and hard; we have to refresh ourselves so we can do a better job at serving God’s people. If we are not refreshed and ready for the day; how can we serve each other.”

Responder #109: “I do not hold the Army or my ministry to blame for any lack of sabbath. None of these questions asked about the intrusions from life which distract from

my regular sabbath, there are a far greater factor than my ministry. (Social media, newspapers, leisure, etc.)

Responder #145: “I think we confuse the sabbath with the American day off. I think that is why we are spiritually weak.”

Responder #169: “I remember a wiser older officer telling me in my young years that the more responsibilities he had, the more time he spent with God. I’ve applied that in my life and it has done wonders to my longevity as an officer.”

Summation

This survey confirms one of the issues with my thesis: there is a great desire to practice and a great hunger to understand what sabbath rest truly looks like. Based on the qualitative results of this survey, the good news is that there many officers who are already activity pursuing sabbath in their lives. There are however other active Salvation Army officers of the Western Territory who this survey reveals at times are either too busy to take sabbath, unable to clearly define sabbath or are overwhelmed by numerous challenges that face them in a twenty-four/seven type of occupation. Yet, there is a spirit of optimism and hope that perhaps this project and what comes out of it can assist the active officer force of the Western Territory to engage in discussions, teaching and embracing the beautiful aspects of sabbath rest.

In my personal interactions with officers and soldiers a like on this topic over the past several months there has been a sincere yet emotional response to the topic. The full gamut from legalistic interpretations of sabbath to never having time off to rest. The results of this survey only tend to prove and point to the fact that within The Salvation Army officer force in the Western Territory, we need to do a better job at understanding, discussing and be more proactive in making the sabbath a priority in our lives. The benefits outweigh the cons. The work of the ministry will always be there. The machine

will never stop. But Salvation Army officers are not machines. They are created in the image of God, with a soul and body that needs tender loving care and rest. Rest to be restored so that a greater work can be accomplished.

My discussions with other officers on this particular topic have been passionate. There is a great desire to try to figure out how sabbath can become a regular part of the life of these caring giving individuals. Numerous inquiries have been given to me via email, social media contacts and face to face encounters, desiring for a clear explanation of what sabbath really is, once and for all. But I am being pressed to go even a bit further than a mere theological primer. How can an officer who is responsible to open up a morning feeding program seven days a week for the homeless population in his or her community find rest? How can an officer who is over worked, discouraged, finding little if any support from the laity, continue to carry the burden of the ministry and yet take time to rest? What is the so what to all of this study and talk?

This has led me to think out some practical ways that I can help the broader Salvation Army. I will share some of those concepts in the next chapter as I make a summation of all I have learned. One simple thing that I will be doing is to post the results of the survey online for all participates to read and reflect on. In my current ministry position at the training college I am making an intentional effort to make sure the term sabbath is used and that wherever possible sabbath is modeled by staff officers to the students.

The information gathered here will be used to broaden the discussion of sabbath and attempt to enter the topic into Salvation Army culture. I hope that the information

gathered here will generate a healthy and holy response for officers of the Western Territory and perhaps within the global ranks of my colleagues. My sincere hope is that there will be a greater embracing of sabbath and more officers will enter the holy rest of sabbath that God so greatly desires for His children.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Introduction

The irony in dealing with a subject matter such as the sabbath is that one can read so much information, write for so long on the matter, engage in, debate and discuss the subject ad nauseam with others and yet miss embracing it all together. As the thesis draws to a conclusion, I have to confess that this has been my experience.

“Physician, heal thyself” has been a phrase bouncing around in the recesses of my packed brain as I have drawn to the end of this thesis project. As I was pressing on to meet self-imposed deadlines based on high expectations to get this thesis venture completed, I was kindly reminded by my administrative assistant that I hadn’t taken all my vacation dates this year. When she said I had six days remaining and asked me when was I going to schedule them, it was like I received a quick swift kick to my gut. What right, or better yet, what business do I have writing and studying on a subject that I am not even close to perfecting in my own life? Sabbath rest at times eludes me.

The idea of the problem of the initial thesis came to me quickly. I was spending some time in silence on retreat with my doctor of ministry cohort. It was in that quiet time that I was quickly convicted of the thought that though I was heavily engaged in the work of ministry, I rarely had time to breathe, let alone take time to physically stop and soak in the beauty of rest. The concept of sabbath in spiritual formation kept returning to my thoughts throughout that first week. I thought about the concept in terms of my own life. Then it trickled over into the thinking about the role as a Salvation Army officer. Dedicated to serve suffering humanity, 24-7, worldwide, can take a physical, emotional

and spiritual toll on The Salvation Army Officer (or anyone) who fails to practice sabbath rest much less give it one second of thought. The concept of sabbath was never taught to me. Nor is it in the verbiage of the culture of The Salvation Army. That is not to take a dig at the organization; it's just more based on the realism of the drive and passion of its mission.

What it is Not

One of the biggest takeaways that I have gained from this thesis project is my reflection on what sabbath is not. It is not a day off. It's not a day that I simply just stop doing one task and replace it with another long litany of undertakings to complete. It is a holy day. It is a day in which I must separate myself completely. Where I begin disengage my busyness so I may attend to the business of my soul care. The day is in debate for centuries. The most profound and frank comment I read on what sabbath is not came from Dan Allender:

Many who take the sabbath seriously and intentionally ruin it with legislation and worrisome fences that project the sabbath but destroy its delight. For many sabbath keepers, it is a day of duty, diligence and spiritual focus that eschews play and pleasure for Bible reading, prayer, naps and tedious religious services that seem designed to suck the air out of the soul. If that is keeping the sabbath holy, then it's better to break it.¹

The Jews celebrate from sundown to sundown on Friday and Saturday. Christians partake of sabbath on Sunday as a celebration of the resurrection of Jesus. But for me in my occupation, Sunday has been the most hectic and busiest day of my week. It is not the ideal day for me to set aside and cease from my activities. I search for other times in my week where I can have the divine appointment of delighting in ceasing and resting.

¹ Allender and Tickle, Sabbath, 8.

I have encountered some individuals in the survey who approach the sabbath from a very legalistic way. One responder wrote: “I separated from The Salvation Army because they do not recognize 7th Day, nor His Name, nor His appointed times. In response to question 16, responder 4 stated that “There are no other groups to join...” Responder 7 to question 16 answered the question with a question: “How do you expect to change the Army’s culture?” Both of these responses left me with a bit of a fatalistic feeling. On one hand, because we in The Salvation Army do not abide for some stricter interpretation of sabbath, that individual would rather not be a part of the serving community and roams about trying to find some place that will view sabbath as they do. On the other hand, is the never ending and relentless call for those serving in The Salvation Army to do more: “that and better will do”, were mission words from the founder, William Booth. The internal culture is so engrained in doing the most good, taking a break from that can be seen by some as lazy, unnecessary or a waste of time.

To be fair, I didn’t intend for this project to be the end all on the discussion of sabbath rest and how it is implemented in one’s life. I also didn’t set out to change the way an individual Salvation Army officer may view sabbath within the context of the organization. As in previous chapters I have mentioned the generous offering of time off that the average officer is given, and yet half of us do not even make use of that time that is given for us to be away. In response to question 16, responder 6 stated the following challenge: “The Salvation Army is a ministry and ministry is busy... We are to be about OTHERS, but many times we are worn out from taking care of OTHERS and we can’t give what we don’t have.” Thus, the need to develop sabbath as a spiritual discipline exists within the work force of my colleagues and in the context of my own journey. The

work will never end. If my friends and I do not seek to cease, rest and embrace sabbath, we will not be able to carry on the work of helping others.

While on this study I was drawn to several passages of scripture in both testaments. The command of keeping the sabbath arises from the Old Testament:

Remember the sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.²

God set the sabbath day for the Israelites to spend unhurried time in worship and rest. The initial concern for His creation was there in the beginning: rest would need to be entered into. The reflection for me on this passage all along has been even in the midst of all my busyness in kingdom work, if I fail to take time to rest and worship I obviously do not think much of God's place in my life. This command is not an ancient directive without a premise or a purpose. There is a great benefit that comes to me when I adhere to this command. He tells us to stop, rather to cease and to embrace the day. Sabbath is not a day where I focus on what I don't do, but rather it's a day of when I can truly be in God's presence now and in the week to come.

Another passage is found in Isaiah:

If you keep your feet from breaking the sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the sabbath a delight and the LORD's holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, then you will find your joy

² Exodus 20:8-11.

in the LORD, and I will cause you to ride in triumph on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.³

This passage reminds me that I do not always know what is best for me. Sabbath rest is an honorable event to participate in some fashion weekly. The promise is that when I embrace and engage in it, joy and delight are mine. The every-day events of my life can be at times very overwhelming to dwell on. When I take this time to get singular in focus on rest things change. I begin to see that God is truly bigger than any problem I may be facing and desires greatly to be a part of the solution. I can worship Him in community that draws me away from myself and allows me to immerse myself into the needs of others.

In 2005 I spent two months in London at The Salvation Army International College for Officers. It is a specialized appointment that at the time lasted eight weeks. There, fellow colleagues from all over the world joined me. We were to spend some time attending to the needs of our spiritual life and learn more about the worldwide work of The Salvation Army. Attending the ICO is the closest thing The Salvation Army comes to offering a sabbatical to its active officers but it's only for a select few at best. My attendance came at the right time. I was in the midst of ministry burnout with my pioneer adventures in establishing the Kroc Center.⁴

At the beginning of our first worship meeting together, one of the staff officers shared this verse that has long resonated with me in regards to sabbath:

³ Isaiah 58:13-14.

⁴ I have recorded the details of this part of my journey in chapter one of this thesis project.

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.⁵

I will never forget what the officer said after he read this portion of scripture:

“Some of you need to learn to live freely, lightly again. May that be your experience here.” It was if I was given permission for the first time in my spiritual journey to truly engage in what sabbath meant namely, finding the rest that I needed. That time spent in reflection, solitude, and in community with colleagues of different races and languages remains an “Ebenezer” moment for me to this day. I have carried that memory into this project as I have conducted the survey of my colleagues here in the west. I know that some work very long hours, struggle with lack of staff, money and physical energy.

Takeaways

Pouring over the comments left on the survey I came away with a greater intensity to study more, speak more, teach more and write more on the subject of sabbath rest. I am convinced that it is clearly still very misunderstood and not totally a part of our ministry’s culture as it should be. I have observed an exchange between people who approach it from a legalistic side to one who just considers it as a day off. In response to question 16, responder 58 simply wrote: “Help us solve the matter.” My simple hope and prayer is that over the course of my study these past few years and all that I have read and researched on sabbath that others will benefit in their soul care. I am taking away perhaps more thoughts and things that must be developed in my life than I truly know at

⁵ Matthew 11:28-30.

this point in time. But in giving this some reflection, I have come up with a few concluding ideas from this project.

The first thing that is important to recognize about sabbath is that this whole matter goes beyond legalism. Jesus reminded us that the sabbath was created for man. I am reminded of the metaphor that Mark Buchanan when thinking about the cats he observed growing up who were at rest in the patches of sunlight that would creep into the house each day. The cats would nap, awaken and then move as the sunlight moved throughout the day:

That image comes to mind when I think of sabbath: a patch of sunlight falling through a window on a winter's day. It's a small yet ample chunk of space, a narrow yet full segment of time. In it, you can lie down and rest. From it, you can rise up and go – stronger, lighter, ready to work again with vigor and a clear mind. It is room enough, time enough, in which to relinquish all encumbrances, to act as though their existence has nothing to do whatsoever to do with your own. It is an invitation, at one and the same time, to empty yourself and fill yourself.⁶

This is a personal invitation from the God of Creation for me to cease and desist from all activity, draw near to Him and experience the delight of Him drawing near to me. Sabbath is to bring me closer to God. It brings about space for me to grow. There is an aerating of my soul that is taking place when I stop. The ground can be massaged. Sin can be onfessed. I have put myself in a place to listen, to reflect and to be recharged for certainly the work that is ahead for me to accomplish. I long to run to that sunbeam. To bask in its warmth and its call to cease. It is no longer about a particular day with a hard and fast set of rules for me. It is all about accepting that invitation and embracing the concept of ceasing. Restoration of my soul is just waiting.

⁶ Buchanan, *The Rest of God*, xv.

A major lesson I have learned in all of this is that I have to be very intentional to make sabbath rest a habitual part of my life. I have had to own up to the fact that one of the reasons this has not been the case in my life is how much I have based my Christian journey on my false self. That somehow all the work and I do and this incredible organization I work for, will all come crashing to a halt if I take a time out to rest. In response to question 16, responder 94 left these candid comments:

I think The Salvation Army has created a culture of...whoever works the hardest or is doing the most is the best and many officers get caught up in competition because of rank, who is doing the most, who has the best appointment type of mind set...I believe we should all work hard, we should give our all, but not at the expense of not taking a sabbath so we really can give God our all.

This kingdom work is vital work. This work as a Salvation Army is demanding. The literal lives of many individuals are on the line. Will there be food at the next meal? Will there be a roof over the head for my children? Will I be able to stay off this drug or off the bottle one more hour? These are the questions that come from the people in the margins that the typical officer has to wrestle with daily. If I don't help, who will? If not now, when?

Pushing the reality of these concerns aside, I do have to remind myself that this is God's work and these are His people. His provision will come through and probably in better fashion if I am working with a recharged body and mind. That can come to be when sabbath is a part of my thinking and my own spiritual discipline. When I connect rest with rejuvenation, I can function better in the sphere of my true self. That is a win-win for all involved.

Another takeaway is the time I have spent with the four terms that seem to revolve around the term sabbath: ceasing, resting, celebrating and embracing. I have explored these times in my literature review portion of this this project. There is a special weaving of these words that needs to be intertwined in my engagement of sabbath. The majority of the people who answered the survey answered that resting would be the most important word in the sabbath vocabulary. As many believe sabbath is a day off, it would naturally come to that. There is a cry for more thought given to these terms: “I am actually to the point where I need to think harder about resting. In response to question 16, responder 175 admitted that “there are times I can’t even sleep at night because there is so much on my mind.” Physically weary and spiritually exhausted are two common fall out symptoms of lack of sabbath rest that takes place in my soul. I turn again to Mark Buchanan who chimes in here to remind us something vital about sabbath: “Sabbath keeping is more art than science. It is more poetic than arithmetic. It is something we get a knack for more than memorize procedures about. It’s like a painting: done by numbers, it comes off as stiff and botchy. But done with discipline and imagination and passion, it both captures and enhances life.”⁷ The phrase poetic here pulls at my heart as sabbath really is about the dance of delight of the soul. In line with the words surrounding my exploration of sabbath that have come to grow on me, I can never think about the word ceasing in any different light that a brilliant connection to sabbath.

Intentionality

In some self-reflection moments after the “so what” of this sabbath exploration experience, I do realize that I fall short in my consistent personal application of sabbath

⁷ Buchanan, *The Rest of God*, 111.

practices. However, that has been changing for the better as I come to the end of this project. There is no need for me to remain neither in a sphere of ignorance on the subject nor in the area of lack of personal discipline over the idea of ceasing. Sabbath practice must be my personal reality and not something that I deal with theory only. It is safe to say that I believe this is rapidly becoming a part of my lifestyle.

Gaining a rhythm of rest in one's life after living three decades of active ministry engagement on the run is not some small challenge to overcome. My reading and study on this whole topic has reminded me if that sabbath is to become a part of the cadence of my spiritual journey, I must be intentional about making it happen. To make this happen I have had to first come to the realization though I may talk a good game about sabbath rest, I have to be completely honest with myself is making sure that I am really engaged in it. I started with developing my own personal rule of life where one of my personal precepts is that I will be intentional about taking weekly sabbath. For the most part I have attempted to take one day a week, mostly Saturdays, with some positive success. The day for the most part is reflection, rest and disengaging in what I would normally do during my workweek. It may simply be ignoring my phone and electronic toys, to going on walks with my wife and my dog, to going out to shop or eat out away from home. Carving out time in my daily journey to grab those "sunbeam sabbath" moments that Mark Buchanan describes in his book, "The Rest of God", has also been something new for me to engage in. Intentional and learning to lean into a sense of the awareness of God's presence in my life has been a rewarding and enriching experience to my soul. Developing these habits of rest and reflection are essential for me to finish my last decade of active ministry well.

Potential Plans

The great wrestling match that I have been going through here is what to do with this information that I have been grazing on for the past few years. As I have come to a greater realization how much I have fallen short in this area of embracing sabbath I do realize that this is not a part of my church culture as I have previously discussed. There is a need to distribute the information that I have gleaned here for the greater good of the officer and soldier force of The Salvation Army worldwide. The following are a few brief suggested plans that I am dreaming up as a way to potentially make sabbath more of a reality in the life of an active Salvation Army officer.

The first place to teach and model this would be of course in my current appointment at the training college. The slam on our training program has been for years that it's important to keep the schedule crammed packed in the life of a cadet so as to not let them have time to waste. I would begin by placing an emphasis in our spiritual formation program how sabbath needs to become a part of our journey. This would be done by carefully selected curriculum for spiritual formation groups that are in existence. Also by crafting sermons based on the topic. I would encourage more space for sabbath to be allotted in the schedule. But more importantly, for the staff officers to model this in their own personal lives. Observing rather than listening to a lecture or reading a book on sabbath living is caught more by the student. The value of implementing it in the community of an academic institution is that it would become incorporated more into the culture of ministry life once the students take to their field assignments when commissioned.

Another opportunity to begin to teach and discuss more on helping Salvation Army officers to experience the sabbath is in an officers councils setting. There are plenty of spiritual formation teaching and leadership resources to use in a setting like a gathering of officers. There has to be intentionality from the top administration to see the value and model how sabbath can be instrumental in the life an officer. Part of the research unveiled here is evident enough that this is a problem for officers on the field. Many do not feel they see that sabbath rhythms are being modeled by senior administrative officers. More direct dialogue, teaching and engagement of the subject is needed and the vehicle of doing that exists with these mandated councils that take place often two times a year.

On the local level some very clear and direct biblical teaching and understanding of sabbath needs to be communicated to the soldiers. Often times there is much confusion about this subject as a spirit of legalism and negativism rises. A curriculum should be developed (or purchased) where a corps officer (local pastor) could develop teaching in Sunday school and sermons in their pulpit ministries about sabbath. I would challenge the local corps community to engage in this topic and find ways that they together could instigate of culture of sabbath within their local unit.

On a broader scale within the territory there has been a move to develop a spiritual formation retreat for both active officer and lay soldier. I have been a part of the planning of this event. The inaugural retreat is tentatively scheduled to take place sometime in the fall of 2016. One of the topics that I have brought to the table for discussion is this whole issue of how sabbath is lacking in the lives of our officers and

soldiers. This would be a great opportunity to not only teach directly about it but also carve into the schedule time for sabbath to take place.

The last thing that I have been personally challenged to do by others and from within myself is to write a book on this subject with the life of a Salvation Army officer in mind. The material I have covered in this project is perfect fodder for some sort of manuscript. As stated previously I have come across a topic here there is little written about it internally within The Salvation Army itself internationally. The issue for me personally will be to take all that I have gleaned and place it in written form in such a way that is digestible across cultural lines and ministry obligations for the average officer.

Conclusion

“Be aware of the machinery” were wise words that a seasoned Salvation Army officer shared with me. They serve both as a warning and as a guide that has stuck with me over the years of my active service. I often reflect back to that conversation often in the recesses of my mind. I hear the whirl of the machines of ministry. “Do the most good.” “Need has no season.” “Heart to God. Hand to man.” The sanctified slogans spew forth, all good, all solid and all reasonable motivational phrases for me to press on the upward way. But if I plug away at this work with a pace that doesn’t include rest and play, what is the expense I will have to pay?

What happens to us in The Salvation Army if we continue on at a pace that doesn’t allow for rest or see no real value in ceasing? The simple warning is that if we as an organization continue at these supersonic speeds and continue to ignore the need for sabbath rest for active Salvation Army officers, our ranks may begin to physically

dwindle. But what may be worse than that is that spiritual atrophy will set in. The emotional and physical energy levels will begin to tank. The holy motivation will become lost in the fog of physical exhaustion.

The time, I believe, has come to not approach this subject with meekness or feign an ignorant understanding of its meaning. Sabbath is not a day off. It is not to be bathed in legalism in its approach but rather it is to be embraced and celebrated. It is not furlough time. It is not an extended time away from the duties at hand. It is simply a vital means to gain our central rhythm back as we grow in becoming more Christlike in every way. The topic of sabbath must be preached, discussed, read, written, taught and intentionally lived at every level of Salvation Army administration. We must truly learn how to cease from our work, rest in our lord, celebrate our journey and embrace the opportunities that sabbath affords us.

I conclude with this in mind: I must at all cost avoid being swallowed up by the machine of ministry. I must pay attention to the rhythms of my soul. I must notice and pay heed more to the movements of God in my life. Making room to ponder and to pause, to enjoy and create more space and to embrace the delight of hearing the heartbeat of God. Sabbath rest moves out of the pages of theology and the halls of debate. Sabbath rest must become something I embrace and all the more so as I hear the machine of ministry humming.

APPENDIX A

THE SABBATH & THE SALVATIONIST – DOCTORAL SURVEY E-MAIL



The Sabbath & the Salvationist - doctoral survey
Tim Foley USW Officers

09/02/2014 12:00 PM

[Hide Details](#)

Tim Foley; CC: USW:SA Army
USW Officers

Friends,

Today I am launching a brief survey in the Western Territory that explores the topic of the personal Sabbath habits of Salvation Army officers. I am currently in the final stages of completing a doctorate in Spiritual Formation for Ministry Leaders from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Massachusetts. The survey results will be used in my final project.

Click here to follow the link to the survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/usa-sabbath_salvrist

While we are all involved in "doing the most good", each one of us needs to have a regular time for rest and restoration. The purpose of the survey is to collect data on the Sabbath habits of officers and to hear how successful they feel their habits are in contributing to a healthy physical and spiritual life. My research for the project will include information on the current trends, traits, statistics, and other topics regarding the Sabbath Life of pastors in the United States.

This simple questionnaire is completely confidential and strictly anonymous. There are sixteen questions that should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. The survey will remain live from September 2-26, 2014. The scope of this survey is limited to officers of the Western Territory.

I truly appreciate you taking a few minutes of your time to give this some of your thought and attention.

If you would like to follow the progress of my project, see the results of the survey, or receive other resources regarding the subject of Sabbath, please join the group Facebook page: "The Sabbath & the Salvationist."

If you have any questions related to this matter, please do not hesitate to send me a message. I thank you in advance for your kind attention and participation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Major Tim Foley
Training Principal USA Western Territory
310 544-6461
Crestmont.edu

APPENDIX B

THE SABBATH & THE SALVATIONIST SURVEY – 2ND REQUEST E-MAIL



The Sabbath & the Salvationist survey - 2nd request
Tim Foley USW Officers

09/16/2014 12:25 PM
Shirley Carson

Friends

Two weeks ago I sent a link to a survey I am doing for my doctorate project "The Sabbath & the Salvationist". I want to thank those of you who have taken the time and have given some wonderful, thoughtful responses. The over all immediate response was overwhelming. To date I have had 439 responses. My goal was 250. I am now hoping for a 50 percent response from the active officers of our territory which is 734. I have had 359 active officers today respond. 375 responses is my new goal!

I am sending one last request for those of you who have not yet responded or lost the link in your forever full email box! If you wish to participate please follow this link to the survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/sabbath_salvationist

If you would like to follow the progress of my project, see the results of the survey, or receive other resources regarding the subject of Sabbath, please join the group Facebook page "The Sabbath & the Salvationist."

This will be my last reminder about this matter. I will close the survey on Friday, September 26, 2014. If interested I will be happy to share the over all findings of this survey with you once I am done compiling the information.

Thank you for your prayers, interest, encouragement and support as I complete this major task. You have all been a tremendous blessing to me by reading your candid comments and encouraging words.

Blessings!

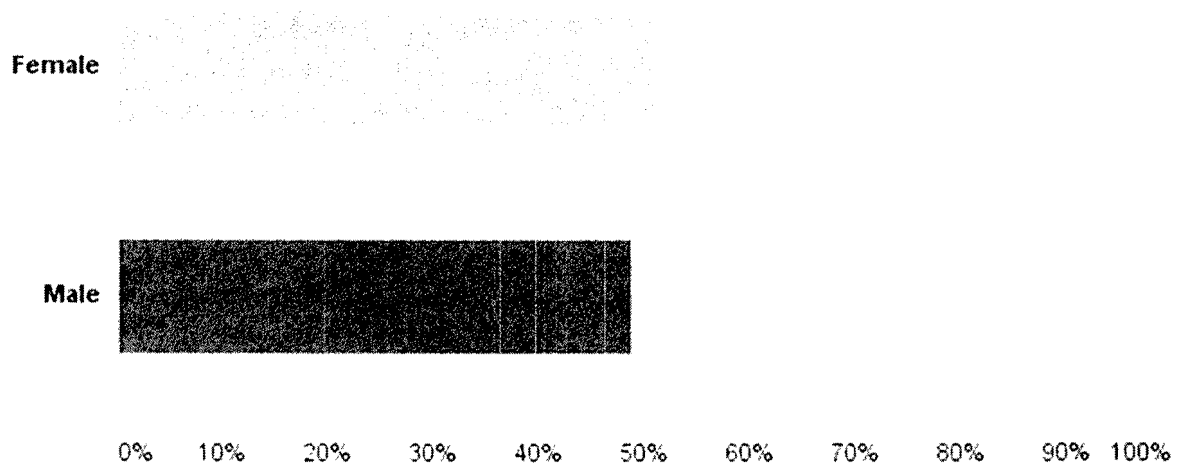
Major Tim Foley
Training Principal USA Western Territory
310 544 6461
Crestmont.edu

APPENDIX C

THE SABBATH & THE SALVATIONIST SURVEYMONKEY QUESTIONS

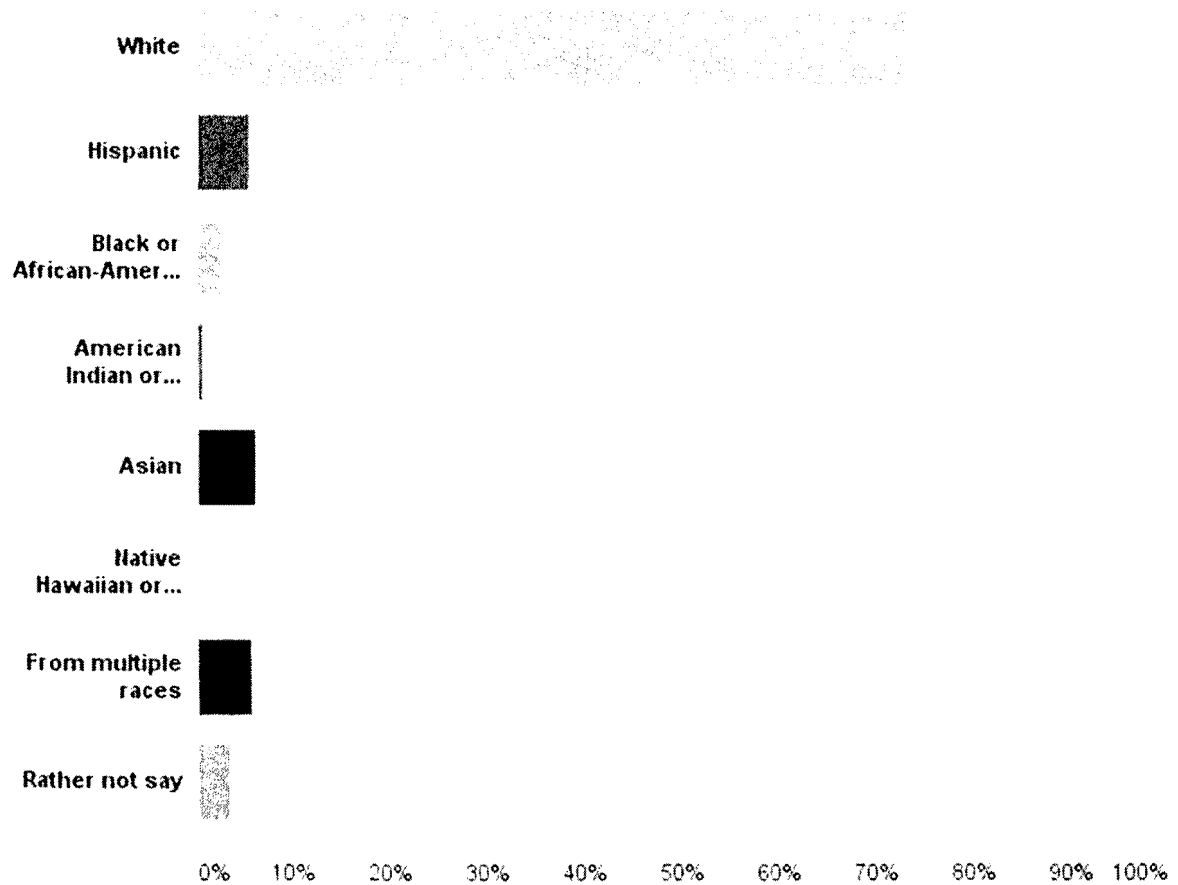
Q1 What is your gender?

Answered: 5/4 Skipped: 46



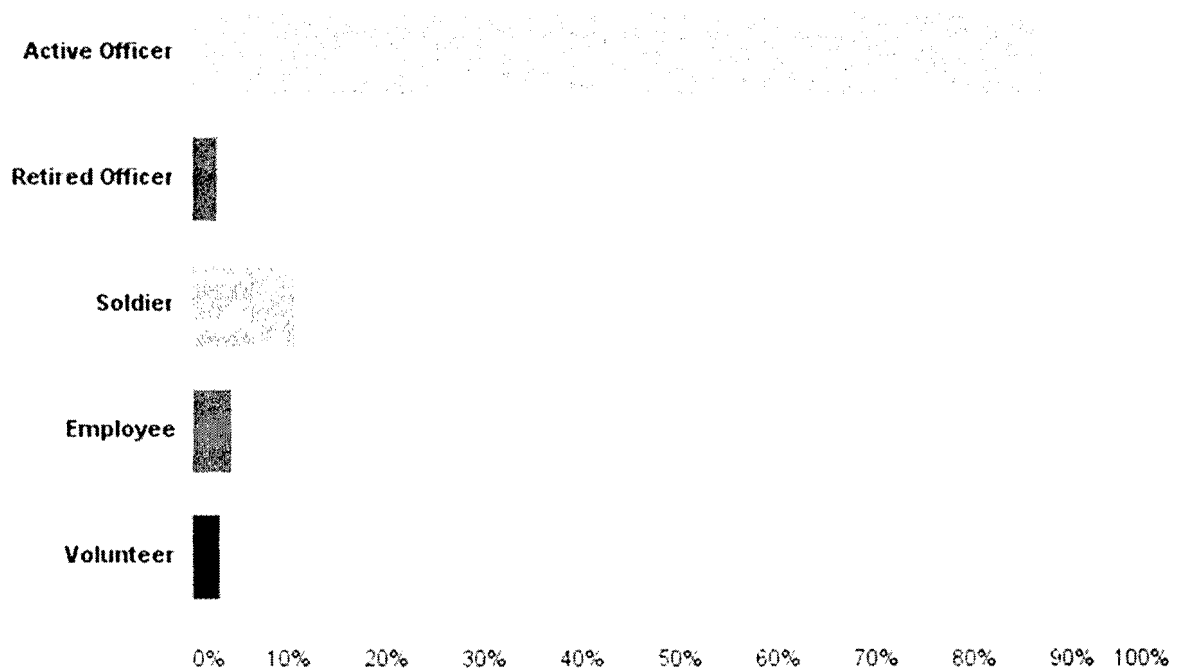
Q2 What is your ethnicity?

Answered: 137 Skipped: 8



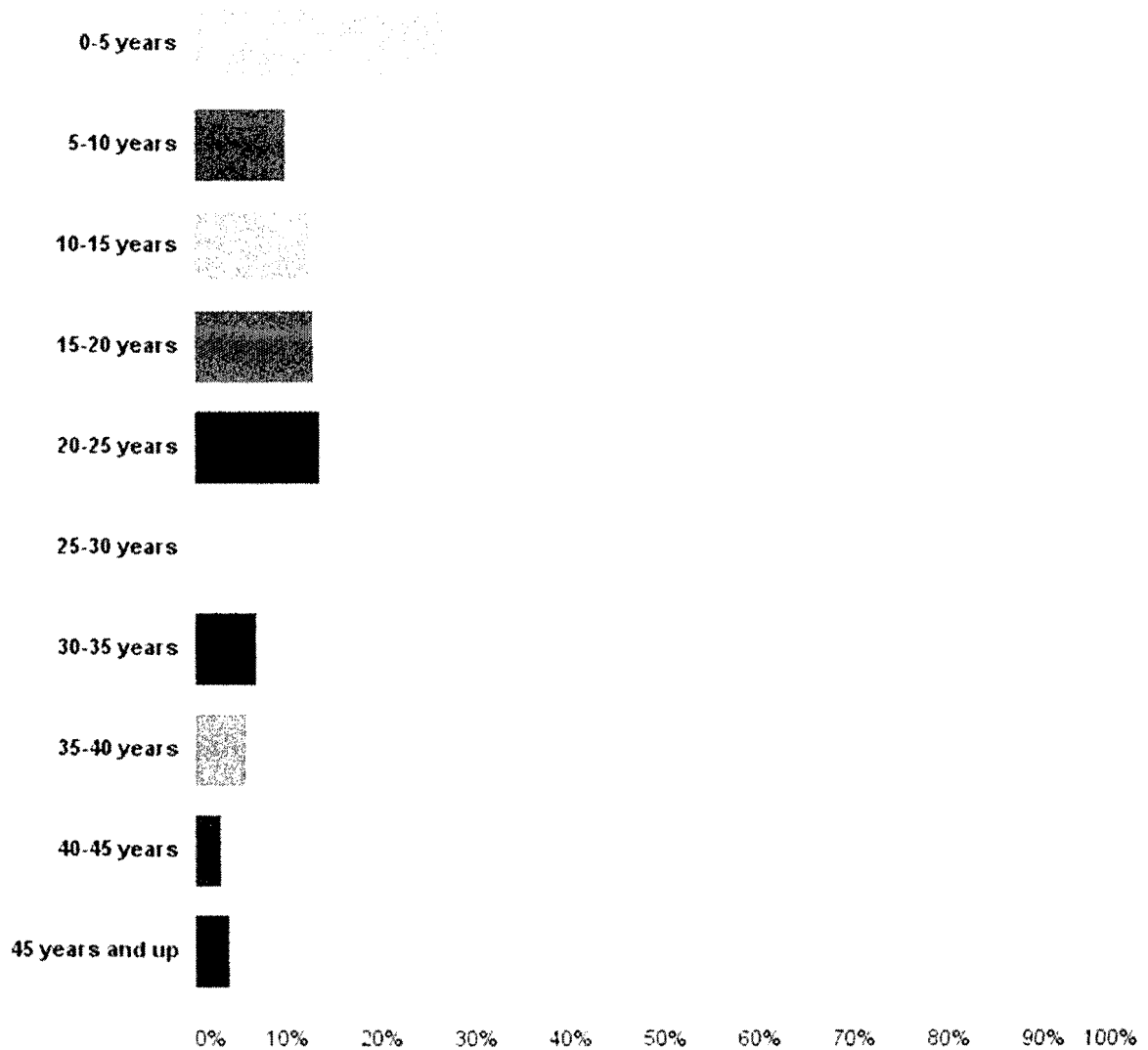
Q3 What is your role in Salvation Army ministry? Check more than one if applicable.

Answered: 508 Skipped: 27



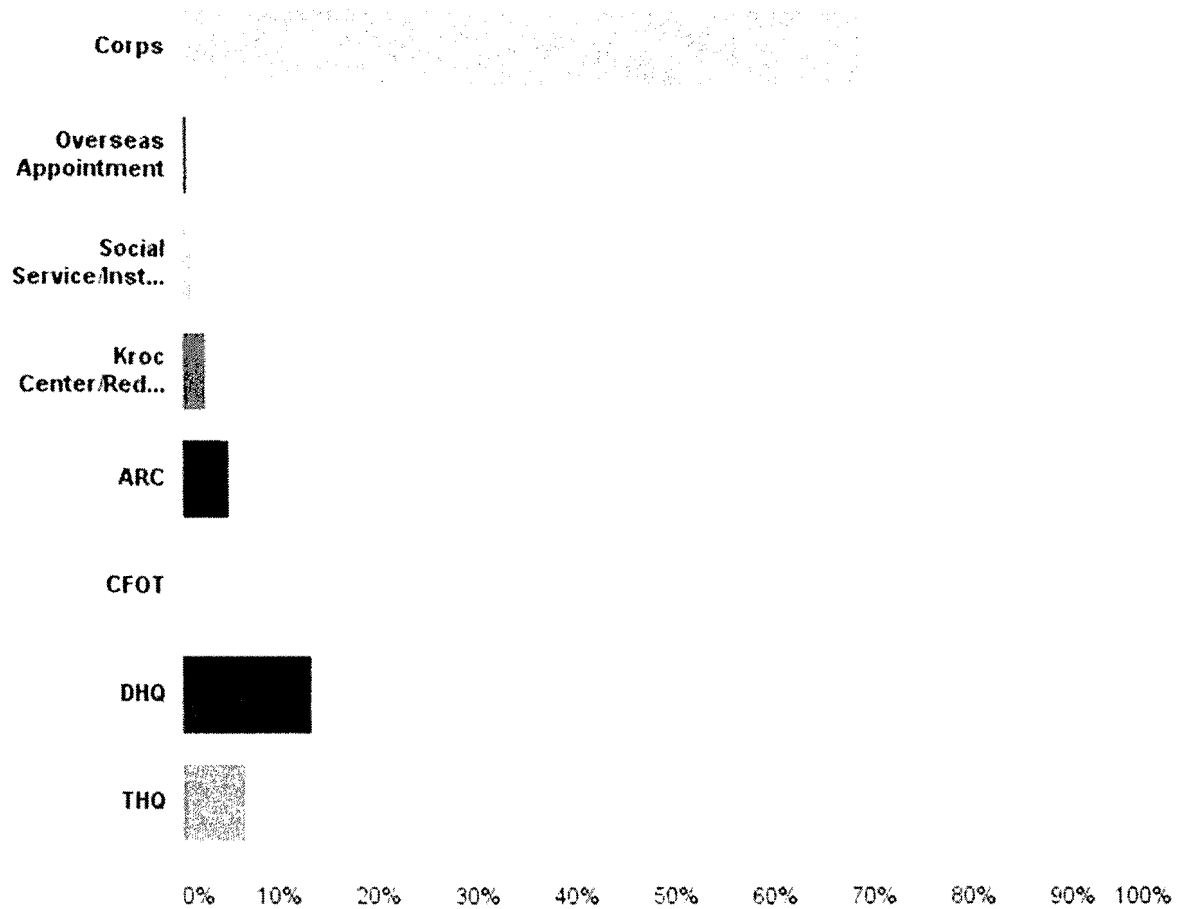
Q4 How many active years have you given in your ministry role?

Answers: 16,570 Skipped: 20



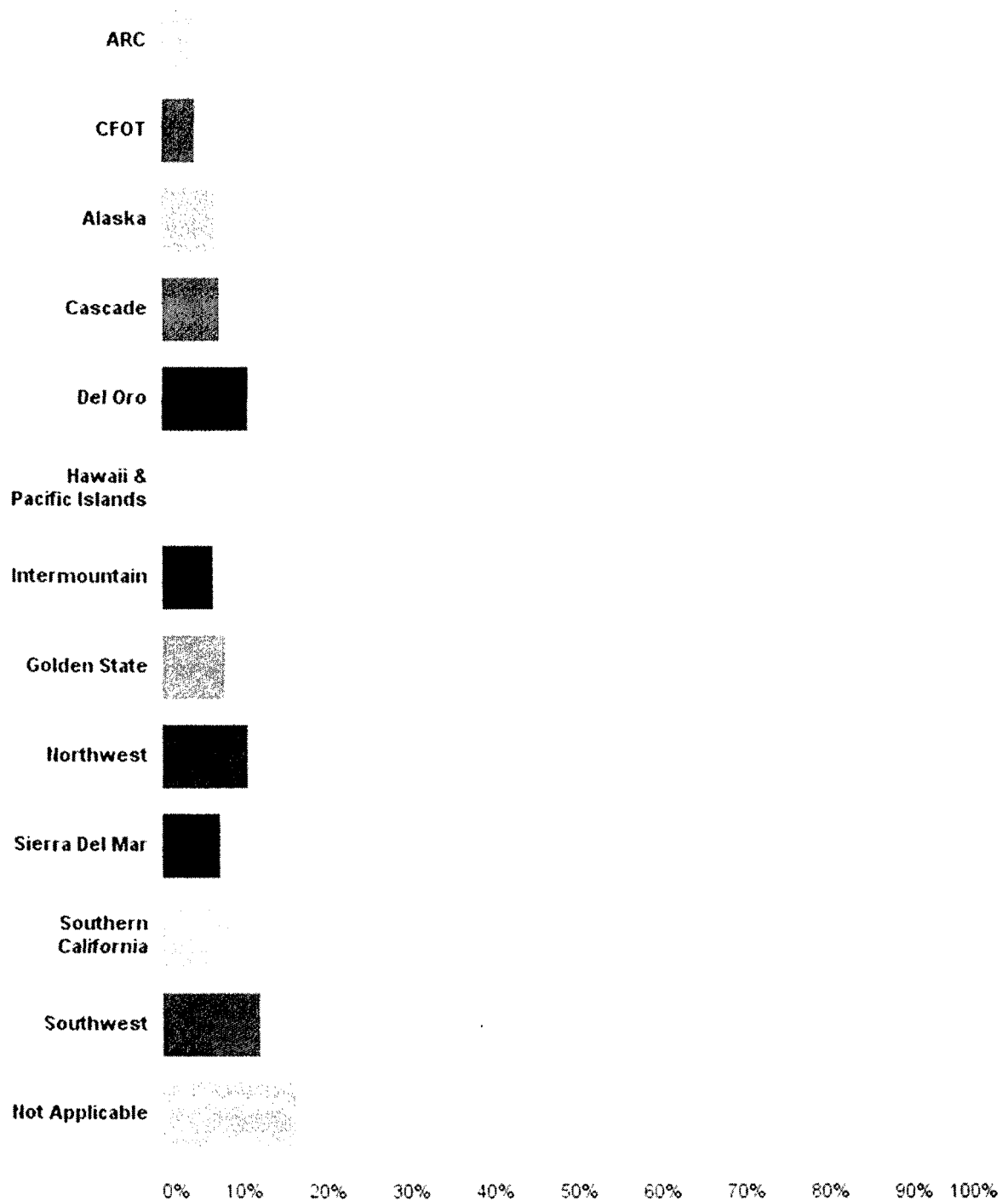
Q5 What is your current appointment?

Answered: 531 Skipped: 0



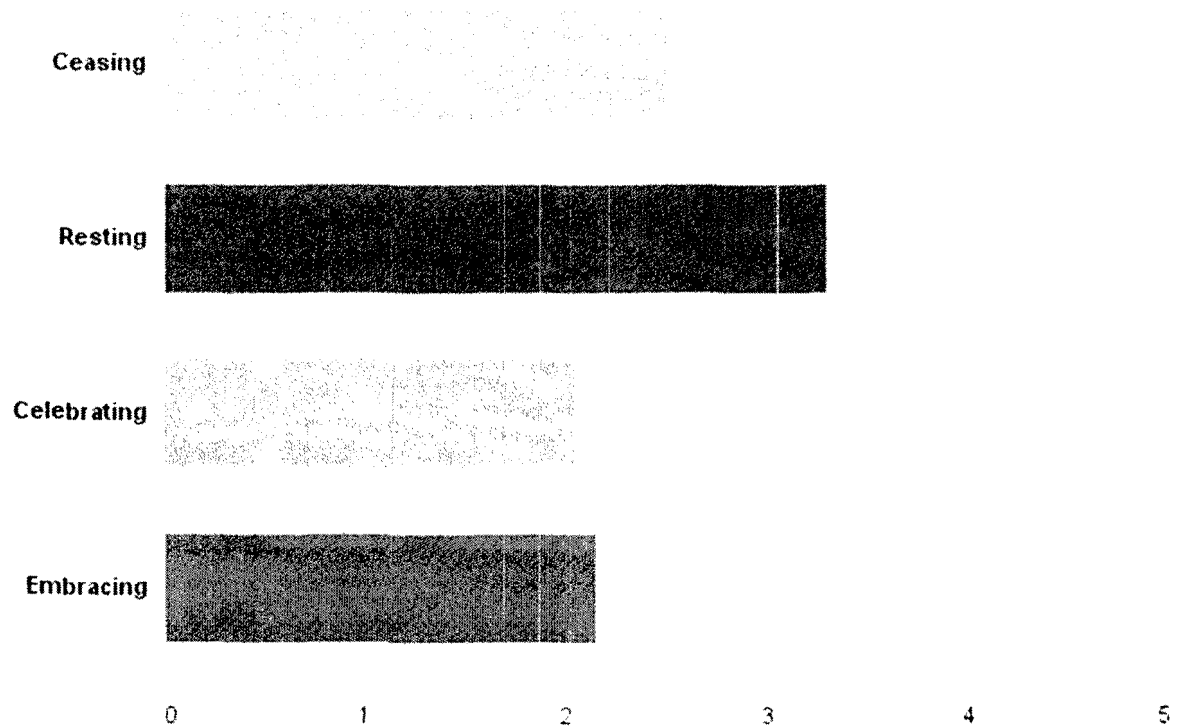
Q6 What command are you assigned to in the US Western Territory?

Answered: 547 Skipped: 33



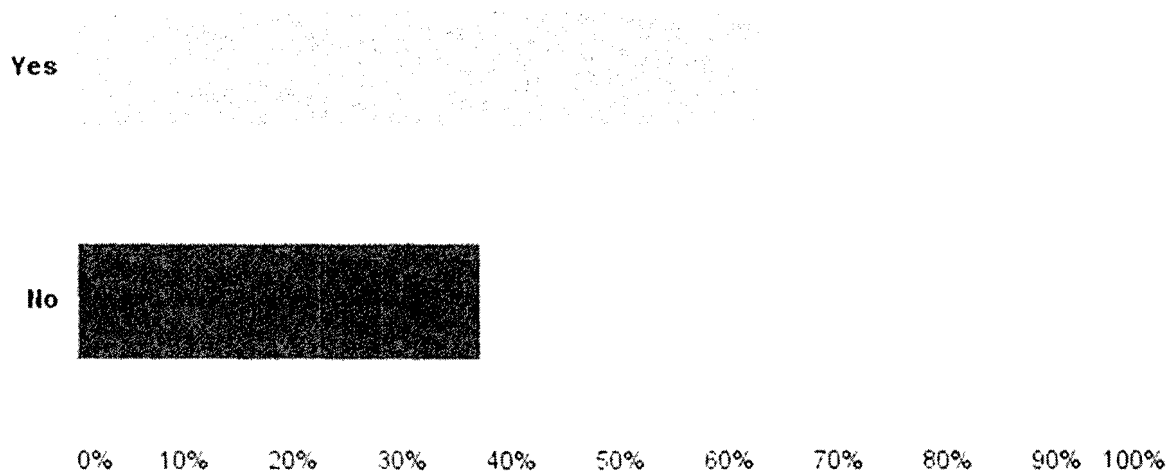
Q8 What is the best term that defines your understanding of sabbath? Rank your selection from one to four.

Answered: 512 Skipped: 76



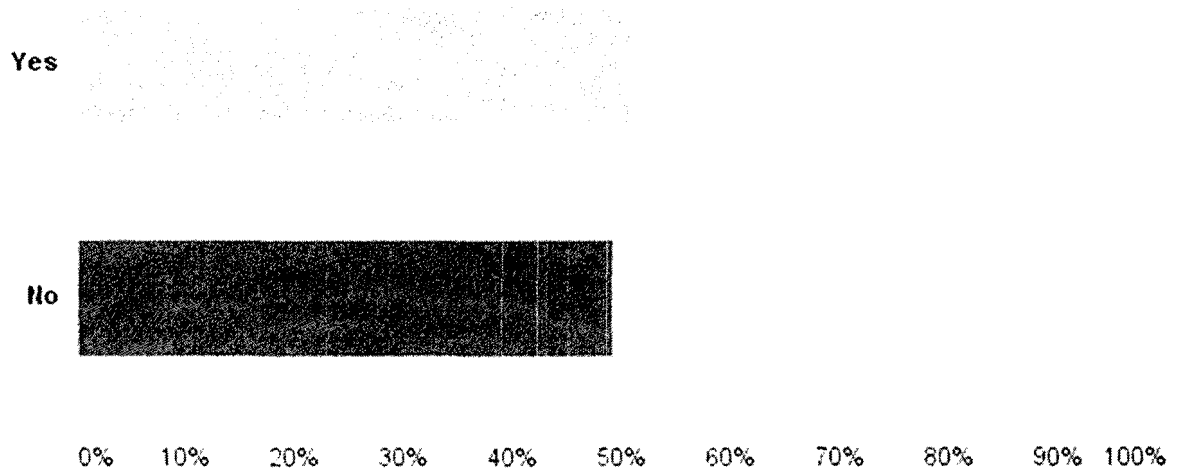
Q10 Do you practice sabbath on a regular basis in your life?

Answered: 514 Skipped: 76



Q12 Do you use all your allotted vacation (furlough) time each year?

Answered: 510 Completed: 510



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Certificate in Critical Incident Stress Management	2004
Certificate in Social Welfare, San Diego State University	2001-2002
Certificate in Hospital Chaplaincy – Good Samaritan Hospitals – Arizona	1996
Master of Arts in Theology	1993-2000
Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA	
Associate of Arts in Liberal Arts	1980-1982
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